GENERAL LEE

MAN AND SOLDIER

THOMAS NELSON PAGE

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GENERAL LEE

MAN AND SOLDIER

BY

THOMAS NELSON PAGE

Ω ξεῖν' ἄγγειλον Λακεδαιμονίοις ὅτι τῇδε
κείμεθα τοῖς κείνων ῥήμασι πειθόμενοι.

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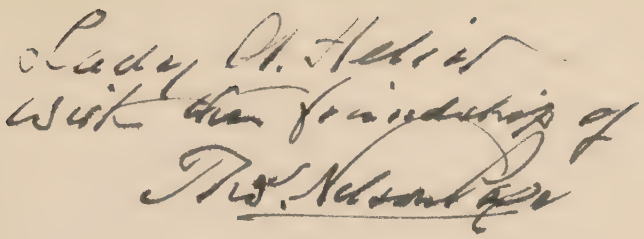

TO THE MEMORY OF

"AS GALLANT AND BRAVE AN ARMY
AS EVER EXISTED":
THE ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA:
ON WHOSE IMPERISHABLE DEEDS
AND INCOMPARABLE CONSTANCY
THE FAME OF THEIR OLD COMMANDER
WAS FOUNDED

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INTRODUCTORY

THIS sketch of a great Virginian is not written with the expectation or with even the hope that the writer can add anything to the fame of Lee; but rather in obedience to a feeling that as the son of a Confederate soldier, as a Southerner, as an American, he owes something to himself and to his countrymen, which he should endeavor to pay, though it may be but a mite cast into the Treasury of Abundance.

The subject is not one to be dealt with in the language of eulogy. To attempt to decorate it with panegyric would but belittle it. What the writer proposes to say will be based upon public records, or on the testimony of those personal witnesses who by character and opportunity for observation would be held to furnish evidence by which the gravest concerns of life would be decided.

True enough it is, Lee was assailed—and assailed with a rancor and persistence which have undoubtedly left their deep impression on the minds of a large section of his countrymen; but as the years pass by, the passions and prejudices

which attempted to destroy him have been gradually giving place to a juster conception of the lineaments of Truth.

"Seest thou not how they revile thee?" said a youth to Diogenes.

"Yea," replied the Philosopher. "But seest thou not how I am not reviled?"

Thus, as we read to-day of the reviling of Lee by those who under the sway of passion endeavored to stigmatize with the terms, "Rebel" and "Traitor," one whom history is already proclaiming, possibly, the loftiest character of his time, the soul is filled, not so much with loathing for their malignity, as with pity for their blindness.

Unhappily, the world judges mainly by the measure of success, and though Time hath his revenges, and finally rights many wrongs, the man who fails of an immediate end appears to the body of his contemporaries, and often to the generations following, to be a failure. Yet from such seed as this have sprung the richest fruits of civilization. In the Divine Economy, indeed, appears a wonderful mystery. Through all the history of sublime endeavor would seem to run the strange truth enunciated by the Divine Master: that, He who loses his life for the sake of the Truth shall find it.

But although, as was said by the eloquent Holcombe of Lee just after his death, "No calumny can ever darken his fame, for History has lighted up his image with her everlasting lamp," yet after forty years there appears in certain quarters a tendency to rank General Lee, as a soldier, among those captains who failed. Some historians, looking with narrow vision at but one side, and many readers ignorant of all the facts, honestly take this view. A general he was, they say, able enough for defense; but he was uniformly defeated when he took the offensive. He failed at Antietam, he was defeated at Gettysburg; he could not drive Grant out of Virginia; therefore he must be classed among captains of the second rank only.

Iteration and reiteration, to the ordinary observer, however honest he may be, gather accumulated force and oftentimes usurp the place of truth. The Public has not time nor does it care to go deeper than the ordinary presentation of a case. It is possible, therefore, that unless the truth be set forth so plainly that it cannot be mistaken, this estimate of Lee as a Captain may in time become established as a general, if not as the universal opinion of the Public.

If, however, Lee's reputation becomes established as among the second class of captains,

rather than as among the first, the responsibility for it will rest, not upon Northern writers, but upon the Southerners themselves. For the facts are plain.

We of the South have been wont to leave the writing of history mainly to others, and it is far from a complete excuse that whilst others were writing history we were making it. It is as much the duty of a people to disprove any charge blackening their fame as it is of an individual. Indeed, the injury is infinitely more far-reaching in the former case than in the case of an individual.

It is no part of my purpose to undertake to discuss critically the great campaigns which Lee conducted or battles which he fought. This I must leave to those military scholars whose experience entitles their judgment to respect. I shall mainly confine myself to setting forth the conditions which existed and the results of the manner in which he met the forces which confronted him.

It is, therefore, rather of Lee, the man, that I propose to speak in this brief memoir, though incidentally I shall endeavor to direct the reader's thought to one especial phase of his work as a soldier, for it appears to me to illustrate the peculiar fibre which distinguished him

from other great Captains and other great men. His character I deem absolutely the fruit of the Virginian civilization which existed in times past. No drop of blood alien to Virginia coursed in his veins; his rearing was wholly within her borders and according to the principles of her life.

Whatever of praise or censure, therefore, shall be his must fall fairly on his mother, Virginia, and the civilization which existed within her borders. The history of Lee is the history of the South during the greatest crisis of her existence. For with his history is bound up the history of the Army of Northern Virginia, on whose imperishable deeds and incomparable constancy rests his fame.

The reputation of the South has suffered because we have allowed rhetoric to usurp the place of history. We have furnished many orators, but few historians. But all history at last must be the work not of the orator, but of the historian. Truth, simply stated, like chastity in a woman's face, is its own best advocate; its simplest presentation is its strongest proof.

It is then, not to Lee the Victorious, that the writer asks his reader's attention, but to that greater Lee: the Defeated.

ROBERT E. LEE,
THE SOUTHERNER

ROBERT E. LEE, THE SOUTHERNER

"A Prince once said of a Monarch slain,
'Taller he seems in Death.'"

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE

ON a plateau about a mile from the south bank of the Potomac River, in the old Colonial County of Westmoreland, in what used to be known as the "Northern Neck," that portion of Virginia which Charles II. in his heedlessness once undertook to grant to his friends and favorites, Culpeper and Arlington, stands a massive brick mansion, one of the most impressive piles of brick on this continent, which even in its dilapidation looks as though it might have been built by Elizabeth and bombarded by Cromwell. It was built by Thomas Lee, grandson of Richard Lee, the emigrant, who came to Virginia about 1641–2, and founded a family which has numbered among its members as many men of distinction as any family in America. It was

through him that Charles II., when an exile in Brussels, is said to have been offered an asylum and a Kingdom in Virginia. When the first mansion erected was destroyed by fire, Queen Anne, in recognition of the services of her faithful Counsellor in Virginia, sent over a liberal contribution towards its rebuilding. It bears the old English name, Stratford, after the English estate of Richard Lee, and for many generations—down to the last generation, it was the home of the Lees of Virginia.

This mansion has a unique distinction among historical houses in this country; for in one of its chambers were born two signers of the Declaration of Independence: Richard Henry Lee, who, in obedience to the mandate of the Virginia Convention, moved the Resolution in Congress to declare the Colonies free and independent States, and Francis Lightfoot Lee, his brother. But it has a yet greater distinction. In one of its chambers was born on the 19th of January, 1807, Robert E. Lee, whom we of the South believe to have been not only the greatest soldier of his time, and the greatest captain of the English-speaking race, but the loftiest character of his generation; one rarely equalled, and possibly never excelled, in all the annals of the human race.

His reputation as a soldier has been dealt with by those much better fitted to speak of it than I; and in what I have to say as to this I shall but follow them. The campaigns in which that reputation was achieved are now the studies of all military students throughout the world, quite as much as are the campaigns of Hannibal and Cæsar, of Cromwell and Marlborough; of Napoleon and Wellington.

"According to my notion of military history," says Field-Marshal Viscount Wolseley, "there is as much instruction both in strategy and in tactics to be gleaned from General Lee's operations of 1862 as there is to be found in Napoleon's campaigns of 1796."

Robert Edward Lee was the second son of "Light Horse Harry" Lee (who in his youth had been the gallant young commander of the "Partisan Legion") and of Anne Carter, of Shirley, his second wife, a pious and gracious representative of the old Virginia family whose home still stands in simple dignity upon the banks of the James, and has been far-famed for generations as one of the best known seats of the old Virginia hospitality. In his veins flowed the best blood of the gentry of the Old Dominion and, for that matter, of England, and surrounding his life from his earliest child-

hood were the best traditions of the old Virginia life. Amid these, and these alone, he grew to manhood. On both sides of his house his ancestors for generations had been councillors and governors of Virginia, and had contributed their full share towards Virginia's greatness. Richard Lee was a scion of an old family, ancient enough to have fought at Hastings and to have followed Richard of the Lion Heart to the Holy Land.* On this side of the water they had ever stood among the highest. The history of no two families was more indissolubly bound up with the history of Virginia than that of the Lees and the Carters. Thus, Lee was essentially the type of the Cavalier of the Old Dominion to whom she owed so much of her glory. Like Sir Walter Raleigh he could number a hundred gentlemen among his kindred and, even at his greatest, he was in character the type of his order.

It has been well said that knowledge of a man's ideals is the key to his character. Tell us his ideals and we can tell you what manner of man he is. Lee's ideal character was close at hand from his earliest boyhood. His earliest days were spent in a region filled with traditions of him who, having consecrated his life to duty, had attained such a standard of virtue that if

* "Lee of Virginia." By Edmund I. Lee.

we would liken him to other governors we must go back to Marcus Aurelius, to St. Louis and to William the Silent.

Not far from Stratford, within an easy ride, in the same old colonial county of Westmoreland, on the bank of the same noble river whose broad waters reflect the arching sky, there spanning Virginia and Maryland, was Wakefield, the plantation which had the distinction of having given birth to the Father of His Country. Thus, on this neighborhood, the splendor of the evening of his noble life just closed had shed a peculiar glory. And not a great way off, in a neighboring county on the banks of the same river, was the home of his manhood, where in majestic simplicity his ashes repose, making Mt. Vernon a shrine for lovers of Liberty of every age and every clime.

On the wall at Shirley, Lee's mother's home, among the portraits of the Carters hangs a full-length portrait of Washington in a general's uniform, given by him to General Nelson who gave it to his daughter, Mrs. Carter. Thus, in both his ancestral homes the boy from his cradle found an atmosphere redolent at once of the greatness of Virginia's past and of the memory of the preserver of his country.

It was Lee's own father, the gallant and gifted

"Light Horse Harry" Lee, who, as eloquent in debate as he had been eager in battle, had been selected by Congress to deliver the memorial address on Washington, and had coined the golden phrase which, reaching the heart of America, has become his epitaph and declared him by the unanimous voice of a grateful people, "First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen."

How passionately the memory of "Light Horse Harry" Lee was revered by his sons we know, not only from the life of Robert E. Lee, himself; but from that most caustic of American philippics: the "Observations on the Writings of Thomas Jefferson, with Particular Reference to the Attacks they contain on the Memory of the Late General Henry Lee, in a Series of Letters by Henry Lee of Virginia."

Mr. Jefferson with all his prestige and genius had found a match when he aroused "Black Harry" Lee by a charge of ingratitude on the part of his father to the adored Washington. In no family throughout Virginia was Washington's name more revered than among the Lees, who were bound to him by every tie of gratitude, of sentiment, and of devotion.

Thus, the impress of the character of Washington was natural on the plastic and serious

mind of the thoughtful son of "Light Horse Harry."

One familiar with the life of Lee cannot help noting the strong resemblance of his character in its strength, its poise, its rounded completeness, to that of Washington, or fail to mark what influence the life of Washington had on the life of Lee. The stamp appears upon it from his boyhood and grows more plain as his years progress.

Just when the youth definitely set before himself the character of Washington we may not know; but it must have been at an early date. The famous story of the sturdy little lad and the cherry tree must have been well known to young Lee from his earliest boyhood, for it was floating about that region when Parson Weems came across it as a neighborhood tradition, and made it a part of our literature.* It has become the fashion to deride such anecdotes; but this much, at least, may be said of this story, that however it may rest solely on the authority of the simple itinerant preacher, it is absolutely characteristic of Washington, and it is equally

* A Japanese officer, a military attaché at Washington, related to the writer that when he was a boy in a hill-town of Japan where his father was an officer of one of the old Samurai, his mother told him the story of George Washington and the cherry tree and tried to impress on him the lessons of truth.

characteristic of him who since his time most nearly resembled him.

However this was, the lad grew up amid the traditions of that greatest of great men, whose life he so manifestly takes as his model, and with whose fame his own fame was to be so closely allied in the minds and hearts of the people of the South.

Like Washington, Robert E. Lee became an orphan at an early age, his father dying when the lad was only eleven years old, and, like Washington, he was brought up by a devoted mother, the gentle and pious Anne Carter of Shirley, a representative, as already stated, of one of the old families of Tidewater Virginia and a descendant of Robert Carter, known as "King Carter," equally because of his great possessions, his dominant character, and his high position in the Colony. Through his mother, as through his father, Lee was related to most of the families of distinction in the Old Dominion, and, by at least one strain of blood, to Washington himself. To his mother he was ever a dutiful and devoted son and we have a glimpse of him, none the less interesting and significant because it is casual, leaving his playfellows to go and take his invalid mother driving in the old family carriage, where he was careful to fasten the

curtains and close up the cracks with newspapers to keep the draughts from her.

Early in his life his father and mother moved from Stratford to Alexandria, one of the two or three Virginia towns that were homes of the gentry, and his boyhood was passed in the old town that was redolent of the memory of Washington. He worshipped in the same church in which Washington had been a pew-holder, and was a frequent visitor both at the noble mansion where the Father of his Country had made his home and at that where lived the Custises, the descendants and representatives of his adopted son.

Sprung from such stock and nurtured on such traditions, the lad soon gave evidence of the character that was to place him next to his model. "He was always a good boy," said his father. "You have been both son and daughter to me," wrote his mother, in her loneliness, after he had left home for West Point. "The other boys used to drink from the glasses of the gentlemen," said one of the family; "but Robert never would join them. He was different."

A light is thrown on his character at this time in a pleasant reference to his boyhood made by himself long afterwards in writing of his youngest son, then a lad. "A young gentle-

man," he says, "who has read Virgil must surely be competent to take care of two ladies; for before I had advanced that far I was my mother's outdoor agent and confidential messenger."*

*Letter of June 25, 1857.

CHAPTER II

FIRST SERVICE

YOUNG LEE selected at an early age the military profession, which had given his father and his great prototype their fame. It was the profession to which all young men of spirit turned. It was in the blood. And young Lee was the son of him of whom General Greene had said that "he became a soldier from his mother's womb," a bit of characterization which this soldier's distinguished son was to quote with filial satisfaction when, after he himself had become possibly the most famous soldier of his time, he wrote his father's biography. At the proper time, 1825, when he was eighteen years of age, he was entered as a cadet among Virginia's representatives at the military academy of the country, having received his appointment from Andrew Jackson, to whom he applied in person. And there is a tradition that the hero of New Orleans was much impressed at the interview between them with the frank and sturdy youth who applied for the

appointment. At the academy, as in the case of young Bonaparte, those soldierly qualities which were to bring him later so great a measure of fame were apparent from the first; and he bore off the highest honor that a cadet can secure: the coveted cadet-adjutancy of the corps. Here, too, he gave evidence of the character that was to prove his most distinguished attribute, and he graduated second in his class of forty-six; but with the extraordinary distinction of not having received a demerit. Thus early his solid character manifested itself. "Even at West Point," says Holcombe, "the solid and lofty qualities of the young cadet were remarked on as bearing a resemblance to those of Washington."

The impress of his character was already becoming stamped upon his countenance. One who knew him about this time, records that as she observed his face in repose while he read to the assembled family circle or sat in church, the reflection crossed her mind that he looked more like a great man than any one she had ever seen.

Among his classmates and fellow students at West Point were many of those men whom he was afterwards to serve with or against in the great Civil War, and doubtless a part of his extraordinary success in that Homeric contest

was due to the accurate gauge which he formed in his youth or a little later in Mexico of their abilities and character. Indeed, as may be shown, this was made almost plainly manifest in his dealings in, at least, three great campaigns of the war: that in which he confronted the overprudent McClellan and defeated him, and those in which he balked the vainglorious Pope and Hooker.

Here is a picture of him at this time, from the pen of one who knew and loved him all his life and had cause to know and love him as a true friend and faithful comrade: his old class mate and comrade in arms, Joseph E. Johnston. They had, as he states, entered the Military Academy together as classmates and formed there a friendship never impaired, a friendship that was hereditary, as Johnston's father had served under Lee's father in the celebrated Lee Legion during the Revolutionary War.

"We had," says General Johnston, "the same intimate associates, who thought as I did, that no other youth or man so united the qualities that win warm friendship and command high respect. For he was full of sympathy and kindness, genial and fond of gay conversation, and even of fun, while his correctness of demeanor and attention to all duties, personal

and official, and a dignity as much a part of himself as the elegance of his person, gave him a superiority that every one acknowledged in his heart. He was the only one of all the men I have known that could laugh at the faults and follies of his friends in such a manner as to make them ashamed without touching their affection for him, and to confirm their respect and sense of his superiority." He mentions as an instance of the depth of his sympathy an occurrence which took place the morning after a battle in Mexico in which he had lost a cherished young relative. Lee, meeting him and seeing the grief in his face, burst into tears and soothed him with a sympathy as tender, declared the veteran long years after, "as his lovely wife would have done."

Small wonder that the soldiers who followed Lee faced death with a devotion that was well-nigh without a parallel.

Still influenced in part, perhaps, by his worship for his great hero, the young officer chose as the partner of his life, his old playmate, Miss Mary Parke Custis, the granddaughter of Washington's step-son, the surviving representative of Washington. Mrs. Lee was the daughter and heiress of George W. Parke Custis, while Lieutenant Lee was poor; but such was her pride in

her husband and her sense of what was his due that on her marriage to him she determined to live on her husband's income as a lieutenant, and for some time she thus lived.* It was a fitting training for the hardships she was called on to face when her husband as Commander-in-Chief of the Confederate Armies, deemed himself happy to be able to send her one nearly dried up lemon. Their domestic life was one of ideal devotion and happiness. Should we seek through all the annals of time for an illustration of the best that exists in family life, we need not go further to find the perfection and refinement of elegance and of purity, than that stately mansion, the home of Lee, which from the wooded heights of Arlington looks down upon the city of Washington; and has by a strange fate, become the last resting-place of many of those whose chief renown has been that they fought bravely against Lee.

With the distinction of such a high graduation as his, young Lee was, of course, assigned to the Engineers, that corps of intellectual aristocracy from which came, with the notable exceptions of Grant and Jackson, nearly all the officers who attained high rank during the war.

* This fact was stated to the writer by the wife of General Wm. N. Pendleton, Mrs. Lee's close neighbor and friend.

His first service was in Virginia, and he was stationed at Fortress Monroe when occurred in a neighboring county the bloody negro-uprising known as the "Nat Turner Rebellion," which thrilled Virginia as thirty years later thrilled her the yet more perilous "John Brown Raid" which Lee was sent to quell, and quelled. Lee's letters to his wife touching this episode, while self-contained as was his wont, show the deep gravity with which he regarded this bloody outbreak.

His early manhood was devoted to his profession, wherein he made, while still a young man, a reputation for ability of so high an order, and for such devotion to duty, that when the Mississippi, owing to a gradual change in its banks, threatened the city of St. Louis, General Scott, having been appealed to to lend his aid to prevent so dire a calamity, said he knew of but one man who was equal to the task, Brevet Captain Lee. "He is young," he wrote, "but if the work can be done, he can do it." The city government, it is said, impatient at the young engineer's methodical way, withdrew the appropriation for the work; but he went on quietly, with the comment, "They can do as they like with their own, but I was sent here to do certain work and I shall do it." And he did it. Feel-

ing in the city ran high, riots broke out, and it is said that cannon were placed in position to fire on his working force; but he kept calmly on to the end. The work he wrought there stands to-day—the bulwark of the great city which has so recently invited America and the nations of the world within her gates.

The Mexican War was the training-ground of most of those who fought with distinction in the later and more terrible strife of the Civil War, and many of the greatest campaigns and fiercest battles of that war were planned and fought with a science learned upon the pampas and amid the mountains of Mexico. During the Mexican War, Lee, starting in as an engineer officer on the staff of General Wool, achieved more renown than any other soldier of his rank, and possibly more than any other officer in the army of invasion, except the commander-in-chief.

The scope of this volume will not admit of going into the details of his distinguished services there which kept him ever at the crucial point and which led General Scott to declare long afterwards that he was the "very best soldier he ever saw in the field." His scouts and reconnaissances at Cerro Gordo, Contreras, Churubusco, and Chapultepec, brought him the brevets of Major at Cerro Gordo, April 18, 1874, of Lieutenant-

Colonel at Contreras and Churubusco, and of Colonel at Chapultepec, September 13th. His first marked distinction was won by a reconnaissance made at night with a single guide, whom he compelled to serve at the muzzle of the pistol, wherein he ascertained the falsity of a report that Santa Anna's army had crossed the mountains and lay in their front. This distinction he greatly increased by work at Vera Cruz, by which that strategic point, protected, as was believed, by impregnable defences, was captured. But this, as notable as it was, was as far excelled by his services at Cerro Gordo as that was in turn by his work at Contreras. At Cerro Gordo, where Santa Anna with 13,000 troops and forty-two guns posted in a pass barred the way in an apparently impregnable position, Lee discovered a mountain pass, and having in person led Twigg's division to the point for assault in front, and having worked all night posting batteries, at dawn next morning led Riley's brigade up the mountains in the turning movement which forced Santa Anna from his stronghold. At Contreras again, he showed the divinely given endowments on which his future fame was to rest.

At Contreras the army of invasion found itself in danger of being balked almost at the

Gates of the Capital, and Lee's ability shone forth even more brilliantly than at Cerro Gordo. The defences of the City of Mexico on the eastward appeared impregnable, while an attack from the south, where the approach was naturally less difficult, was rendered apparently almost as unassailable by powerful batteries constructed at San Antonio Hill commanding the only avenue of approach, the road which wound between Lake Chalco with its deep morass on one side, and impassable lava beds on the other. Lee by careful reconnaissance discovered a mule-trail over the Pedregal, as this wild and broken tract of petrified lava was termed, and this trail having been opened sufficiently to admit of the passage of troops, though with difficulty and danger, he conducted over it the commands of Generals Pillow and Worth, and the village of Contreras was seized and held till night against all assaults of the enemy. The position of the American troops, however, was one of extreme peril, as it was known that heavy reinforcements were being rushed forward by the Mexicans, and at a council of war it was decided to advance before dawn rather than await attack from the Mexican forces. It became necessary to inform General Scott of the situation and Captain Lee volunteered for the per-

ilous service. He accordingly set out in the darkness and alone, and in the midst of a furious tropical storm, he made his way back across the lava beds infested by bands of Mexicans, advised the Commander-in-Chief of the proposed movement, and having secured his co-operation, returned across the Pedregal in time to assist in the assault which forced the Mexicans to abandon their position, and opened the way to Churubusco, Molino del Rey and Chapultepec, and, finally, led to the occupation of the capital and the close of the War.

This was, declared Scott, "The greatest feat of physical and moral courage performed by any individual, to my knowledge, pending the campaign."

The "gallantry and good conduct," the "invaluable services," "the intrepid coolness and gallantry of Captain Lee of the Engineers," of "Captain Lee, so constantly distinguished," fill all the dispatches of all the battles of the war, and Lee came out of this war with such a reputation for ability that his old commander, Scott, declared to General Preston, that he was "the greatest living soldier in America." Indeed, Scott, with prescient vision, declared his opinion that he was "the greatest soldier now living in the world." "If I were on my death-

bed to-morrow," he said to General Preston, long before the breaking out of the war, "and the President of the United States should tell me that a great battle were to be fought for the liberty or slavery of the country, and asked my judgment as to the ability of a commander, I would say with my dying breath, 'Let it be Robert E. Lee.'"

Lee, himself, however, declared that it was General Scott's stout heart and military skill which overcame all obstacles and while others croaked pushed the campaign through to final success.

During the period following the Mexican War, Lee was engaged for a time in constructing the defences of Baltimore. Then he was, in 1852, assigned to duty as Superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point, and three years later was assigned to active duty on the southwestern frontier as Lieutenant Colonel of one of the two regiments of cavalry which Mr. Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War, had organized on the recommendation of General Scott and made a separate branch of the service.* He soon rose to the rank of

* Of these regiments E. V. Sumner was Colonel of the first and Joseph E. Johnston was Lieutenant-Colonel, and Albert Sydney Johnston was Colonel of the second, with Lee as his Lieutenant-Colonel.

colonel of cavalry, a position which a great critic of war has asserted to be the best of all training schools for a great captain, and he held this rank when, having been brought to Washington to revise the tactics of the army, he was unexpectedly called on in the summer of 1859 to take charge of the force of marines sent to Harper's Ferry to capture John Brown and his followers in their crazy and murderous invasion of Virginia, with the design of starting a servile war which should lead to the negroes achieving their emancipation. This duty he performed promptly and efficiently.

Long afterwards when he was a defeated general on parole, without means, his every act and word watched by enemies thirsting for his blood, one of the men he had commanded in the 2d Cavalry, but who had fought in the Union army throughout the war, called at his house in Richmond with a basket of provisions for his old commander, and when he saw him seized him in his arms and kissed him.

A light is thrown on his character in the letters he wrote about and to his children during his long absences from home on duty in the West and in Mexico. And it is one of the pathetic elements in the history of this loving and tender father, that with a nature which would have reveled in the

joys of domestic life, he should have been called by duty to spend so large a part of his time away from home that he did not even know his youngest son when he met him. He was ever devoted to children, and amid the most tragic scenes of his eventful life, his love for them speaks from his letters. Writing to his wife from St. Louis in 1837, when he was engaged in engineering work for the government, he speaks with deep feeling of the sadness he felt at being separated from his family, and of his anxiety about the training of his little son. "Our dear little boy," he says, "seems to have among his friends the reputation of being hard to manage—a distinction not at all desirable, as it indicates self-will and obstinacy. Perhaps, these are qualities which he really possesses, and he may have a better right to them than I am willing to acknowledge; but it is our duty, if possible, to counteract them, and assist him to bring them under his control. I have endeavored, in my intercourse with him, to require nothing but what was, in my opinion, necessary or proper, and to explain to him temperately its propriety, and at a time when he could listen to my arguments and not at the moment of his being vexed and his little faculties warped by passion. I have also tried to show him that I was firm in my demands and con-

stant in their enforcement and that he must comply with them, and I let him see that I look to their execution in order to relieve him as much as possible from the temptation to break them."

Wise words from a father, and the significant thing was that they represented his conduct throughout his life. He was the personification of reasonableness. Small wonder that his youngest son, in his memoir of his father, recorded that among his first impressions was the recognition of a difference between his father and other persons, and a knowledge that he had to be obeyed. A touch in one of his letters to an old friend and classmate, then Lieutenant, afterwards Lieutenant General Joseph E. Johnston, gives a glimpse of his love for children, and also of that of another old friend: "He complains bitterly of his present waste of life, looks thin and dispirited and is acquainted with the cry of every child in Iowa."

His son and namesake in his "Recollections" of his father makes mention of many little instances of his love of and care for animals, and the same love of and care for animals constantly shines from his letters.

At one time he picked up a dog lost and swimming wildly in "the Narrows" and cared

for it through life; at another he takes a long, roundabout journey by steamer for the sake of his horse; at another he writes, "Cannot you cure poor 'Spec'?" (his dog). "Cheer him up! take him to walk with you—tell the children to cheer him up." In fact, his love for animals, like his love for children, was a marked characteristic throughout his life, and long after the war he took the trouble to write a description of his horse "Traveller," which none but a true lover of horses could have written.

On his return from Mexico, after an absence so long that he failed to recognize his own child whom he had left a babe in arms, he was, like Ulysses, first recognized by his faithful dog.*

His two elder sons had both entered the military profession, which their father held in the highest honor, and the letters he wrote them illustrated not only the charming relation that existed between father and sons, but the lofty ideal on which he ever modeled his own life and desired that they should model theirs. To his oldest son, then a cadet at West Point, he writes from Arlington (April 5, 1852), as he was on the point of leaving for New Mexico to see that his "fine old regiment" which had been "ordered to that distant region" was "properly

* "Recollections and Letters of General Lee. By R. E. Lee.

cared for": . . . "Your letters breathe a true spirit of frankness; they have given myself and your mother great pleasure. You must study to be frank with the world. Frankness is the child of honesty and courage. . . . Never do a wrong thing to make a friend or to keep one. . . . Above all, do not appear to others what you are not. . . . In regard to duty, let me in conclusion of this hasty letter inform you that nearly a hundred years ago there was a day of remarkable darkness and gloom, still known as the dark day—a day when the light of the sun was slowly extinguished, as if by an eclipse. The legislature of Connecticut was in session, and, as its members saw the unexpected and unaccountable darkness coming on, they shared the general awe and terror. It was supposed by many that the last day—the day of judgment had come. Some one in consternation of the hour moved an adjournment. Then there arose an old Pilgrim legislator, Davenport of Stamford, and said that if the last day had come he desired to be found at his place doing his duty, and therefore moved that candles be brought in so that the House could proceed with its duty. There was quietness in that man's mind, the quietness of heavenly wisdom and inflexible willingness to obey present duty. Duty, then, is the

sublimest word in our language. Do your duty in all things, like the old Puritan. You cannot do more; you should never wish to do less. Never let me or your mother wear one gray hair for lack of duty on your part." *

* It is said that this letter as a whole was made up by a clever newspaper man out of parts of different letters by Lee.

CHAPTER III

THE CHOICE OF HERCULES

WHEN the war came Lee had to face the most momentous question that ever confronted a soldier. The Government of the United States and his own State, which was later to form a part of a new National Government, were about to be arrayed in arms against each other. The former was preparing to invade his native State to coerce by arms the seceded States. He had to decide between allegiance to the general Government whose commission he had borne, whose honors had been conferred on him, and under whose flag he had won high distinction; and allegiance to his native State, which had been a constituent part of that government, and which in the exercise of its Constitutional right, seceded from the Union on being invaded.

The John Brown Raid with its aim, the heading of a servile insurrection throughout the South, backed as it was by blind enthusiasts at the North, affected profoundly all thinking men at the South. Had it proved successful, the

horrors of San Domingo would have been multiplied a thousandfold and have swept over the South in a deluge of blood. The South was enraged by this effort to arouse a slave-insurrection; but the wild sympathy expressed at the North with its murderous leader gave it a shock from which it never recovered. Lee had no illusions respecting slavery. He saw its evils with an eye as clear as Wendell Phillips'. He set forth his views in favor of emancipation in as positive terms as Lincoln ever employed. He manumitted all the slaves he owned in his own right before the war, and within a week after the emancipation proclamation he manumitted all the negroes received by him from the Custis estate, having previous to that time made his arrangements to do so in conformity with the provisions of Mr. Custis's will.

Most men of open minds have long passed the point when we should deny to any honorable man the right to make that election as his conscience dictated. But with most of us sympathy and affection go to the man who chose the weaker side. This choice Lee deliberately made. Who knows what agony that accomplished soldier and noble gentleman went through during those long weeks, when the sword was suspended and he with unblinded

vision foresaw that it must fall. To some men the decision might have been made more difficult by the prize that was suddenly held out to him. But not so with Lee. The only question with him was what was his duty.

The President of the United States tendered to him the command of the armies of the Union about to take the field. This has long been regarded by those who know as an established fact; but it has become the custom of late among a certain class to deny the fact on the principle, perhaps, that an untruth well stuck to may possibly supplant the truth. Of the fact that he was offered the command of the armies of the United States there is, however, abundant proof outside of General Lee's own statement to Senator Reverdy Johnson, were more proof needed. The Hon. Montgomery Blair published the fact as stated by his father, the Hon. Francis P. Blair, that he had been sent by Mr. Lincoln to Colonel Lee with the offer of the command, and long afterwards the Hon. Simon Cameron, formerly Secretary of War in Mr. Lincoln's cabinet, in a published interview, frankly admitted the fact. "It is true," he says, "that Gen. Robert E. Lee was tendered the command of the Union Army. It was the wish of Mr. Lincoln's administration that as many as possible of the

southern officers then in the regular army should remain true to the nation which had educated them. Robert E. Lee and Joseph E. Johnston were then the leading southern soldiers. . . . In the moves and counter moves in the game of war and peace then going on, Francis P. Blair, Sr., was a prominent figure. The tender of the command of the U. S. forces was made to General Lee through him. Mr. Blair came to me expressing the opinion that General Lee could be held to our cause by the offer of the chief command of our forces. I authorized Mr. Blair to make the offer. . . ." *

But the matter is set at rest by a letter from General Lee—his letter of February 25, 1868, to Reverdy Johnston—in which he states that he had a conversation with Mr. Francis Preston Blair, at his invitation, and as he understood at the instance of President Lincoln. "After listening to his remarks," he says, "I declined the offer he made me to take command of the army that was to be brought into the field, stating as candidly and as courteously as I could that, though opposed to Secession and deprecating War, I could take no part in an invasion of the Southern States. I went directly from the interview with Mr. Blair to the

* New York *Herald*, cited Jones's "Lee," p. 130.

office of General Scott, told him of the proposition that had been made me and my decision." * Indeed, it was this offer which possibly hastened his decision.

Two days later, on April 20th, he resigned his commission in the United States Army, declaring that he never wished to draw his sword again save in defence of his native State. Even then he "hoped that Peace might be preserved and some way found to save the country from the calamities of War."

So much we have from his own lips, and that is proof enough for those who know his character.

This action of Lee's at the outbreak of the war, in resigning from the Army of the United States, and later in assuming the command, first of the Virginia forces, and afterwards of the Confederate forces, used, during the period of passion covered by the war and the bitter years which followed, to be made the basis of a criticism whose rancor bore an almost precise relation to the degree of security which had been sought by the assailant during the hour of danger. The men who fought the battles of the Union said little upon the subject. They knew for the most part the feeling which animated the

*See also Jones's "Life and Letters of Robert Edward Lee," p. 128.

breasts which opposed them, and paid it the tribute of unfeigned respect. The conduct of Grant and of his officers at Appomattox, with a single exception, was such as to reflect unending credit on them as men of honour and generosity. The charge of treason was mainly left to those who, having risked nothing on the field of honour, were fain later, when all danger was past, to achieve a reputation for patriotism by the fury of their cries for revenge. To these, the vultures of the race, may be added an element, sincere and not well-informed, who more than half wishing to avail themselves of Lee's transcendent character, have found his action in this crisis a stumbling-block in their way. Having been reared solely upon the doctrine of Federalism, and taught all their lives that the officers of the Army of the Union had received their education at West Point at the hands of the National Government and were guilty of something like treason, or, as it used to be put, treachery, in giving up their commands in the Union Army and bearing arms for their States against the United States, they find it difficult to accept the plainest facts. These are the bigots of Politics.

As the statement is wholly unfounded and as the matter goes to the basis of character, it is

well to point these latter to the facts which disprove wholly and forever the premises on which they have based their erroneous conclusion.

It is well to remember at the outset that in the first place, the action of every man must be considered in relation to the conditions from which that action springs, and amid which it had its being. The most fallacious method of considering history is that which excludes contemporary conditions and undertakes to judge it by the present, the two eras often being far more different than would be indicated by the mere passage of time.

At the time when these officers received their education at the Military Academy, they were sent there as State cadets, and the expense of their education was borne at last by the several States, which, there being at that time no high tariff and no internal revenue taxation to maintain the National Government, made a yet more direct contribution than since the war to the Government for its expenses. In recognition of this fact and as compensation for the contribution by the States, each Representative of a State had the right to send a cadet to each academy. Virginia had been peculiarly instrumental in creating the Union. She had taken a foremost and decisive part in the Revolution

for those rights on which the Constitution was based and subsequently in the adoption of the Constitution. She had led alike in the field and in the Council Chamber. Without her no Union would have been formed, and without her no Union would have been preserved during the early decades of its existence. To make the Union possible she had ceded her vast northwest territory, first embraced in her charter, and later conquered by her sons led by George Rogers Clark.

There had long been two different schools of governmental thought in the country, the one representing the Federalist Party, and the other representing the Republican or Democratic Party. They had their rise in the very inception of the National Government. Their teachings had divided the country from that time on. Originally the chief agitation against the Federal Government had been at the North, and while the parties were not demarked by any sectional lines, for the most part, the body of the Federalist Party were at the period of the outbreak of war, owing to certain conditions connected with the institution of slavery, and to various advantages accruing to the Northern States, as manufacturing States, at the North, while the body of the States' rights party were at the South. Not only

were the powers of the greatest statesmen and debaters in the country continually exercised upon this question, as for example, in the great debates in which Clay, Webster, Hayne, and Calhoun took part on the floor of the Senate, but the teachings in the great institutions of learning were divided.*

But Lee had from his boyhood been reared in the Southern school of States' Rights as interpreted by the conservative statesmen of Virginia. His gallant and distinguished father had been governor of Virginia, and, while heartily advocating in the Virginia Convention the ratification of the Constitution of the United States, favored the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798–99, drawn by Mr. Madison and Mr. Jefferson, which were based upon the States' Rights doctrine. He said in debate, "Virginia is my country, her will I obey, however lamentable the fate to which it may subject me."

He wrote to Mr. Madison in January, 1792, a letter in which he said, "No consideration on earth could induce me to act a part, however gratifying to me, which could be construed into disregard of, or faithlessness to, this Commonwealth."

*A brief and simple statement of the position of the two sides may be found in Ropes's "Story of The Civil War": I. Chap. 1.

Such was the teaching under which Robert E. Lee had been reared. One knows little of Virginia who does not know in what passionate esteem the traditions and opinions of a father were cherished by a son. Political views were as much inherited as religious tenets.

As a matter of fact, at the time that young Lee was attending the Military Academy at West Point, the text-books, such as "Rawle on the Constitution," which were used there, taught with great distinctness the absolute right of a State to secede, and the primary duty of every man to his native State.* "It depends on the State itself," declares this authority then taught at West Point, "to retain or abolish the principle of representation, because it depends on itself whether it will continue a member of the Union." This position was that held by the leaders of New England during the first half of the

* This has been ably and conclusively shown by Mr. Charles Francis Adams, of Massachusetts, in his admirable address on "Constitutional Ethics," and in his memorial address on the life and character of Robert E. Lee, delivered at Washington and Lee University on the occasion of the Hundredth Anniversary of General Lee's birth. His distinguished grandfather, John Quincy Adams, who had been President of the United States, had enunciated the doctrine of Secession clearly, declaring that it would be better for the States to "part in friendship from each other than to be held together by constraint" and "to form again a more perfect Union by dissolving that which could not bind." —Speech of John Quincy Adams, April 30, 1839.

century, and was earnestly advanced both at the time of the acquisition of Louisiana and of Texas.

The action of the Hartford Convention in threatening secession had blazoned abroad the views of the leaders of New England thought at the time when the Virginians were straining every force to maintain the Union; and John Quincy Adams had presented to Congress (January 23, 1842) a petition from a Massachusetts town (Haverhill), asking the dissolution of the Union, on which a motion had been made by a Virginia member (Mr. Gilmer), to censure him, which had been debated for ten days, Mr. Adams ably defending himself.

Indeed, whatever question existed as to the right of a State to secede, there was no question whatever as to her citizens being bound by her action should she secede. The basic principle of the Anglo-Saxon Civilization was the defence of the inner circle against whatever assailed it from the outside, and nowhere was this principle more absolutely established than in Virginia.

In a thoughtful discussion of the action of Virginia at this time, Colonel G. F. R. Henderson, the noted biographer of Stonewall Jackson, says, "There can be no question but that secession was Revolution, and Revolutions, as has been

well said, are not made for the sake of 'greased cartridges.' . . . Secession, in fact, was a protest against mob rule. . . . It is always difficult to analyse the motives of those by whom revolution is provoked; but if a whole people acquiesce, it is a certain proof of the existence of universal apprehension and deep-rooted discontent. This spirit of self-sacrifice which animated the Confederate South has been characteristic of every revolution which has been the expression of a nation's wrongs, but it has never yet accompanied mere factious insurrection. When, in the process of time, the history of secession comes to be viewed with the same freedom from prejudice as the history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it will be clear that the fourth great revolution of the English speaking race differs in no essential characteristic from those that preceded it. . . . In each a great principle was at stake: in 1642 the liberty of the subject; in 1688, the integrity of the Protestant faith; in 1775, taxation only with consent of the taxed; in 1861, the sovereignty of the individual states." *

* Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson." New Impression. I. pp. 93–4.

I have quoted extensively in this volume from this author, feeling that he, as an impartial student of the Civil War and its causes, is an authority to command respect.

Whether, then, those who were in the service of the United States at the outbreak of the war were under obligation to remain in her service after the States seceded, or were under obligation to resign and espouse the side of their several States, was a matter for each man to decide according to his conscience, and scores of gallant and high-minded gentlemen thus decided. Of the three hundred and odd graduates of West Point who were from the South, at least nine-tenths followed their States, and these, men whose character would challenge comparison with the loftiest examples of the human race. That there was an obligation on them to remain, because of the source from which their education came, is sheer nonsense. This education was but a simple return for the money contributed by their States to the General Government. And Virginia had paid for all she got, a hundred times over.

When the great conflict came, the time which tried men's souls, no soul in all the limits of this broad country was more tried than that lofty soul which had for its home the breast of Robert E. Lee. A glimpse of his love for and pride in his country may be found in a letter written during his stay in Texas in 1856. Writing to his wife of the Fourth of July, he says, "Mine was

spent after a march of thirty miles, on one of the branches of the Brazos, under my blanket, elevated on four sticks driven in the ground, as a sunshade. The sun was fiery hot, the atmosphere like a blast from a hot-air furnace, the water salt, still my feelings for my country were as ardent, my faith in her future as true, and my hope for her advancement as unabated as they would have been under better circumstances." *

Such was the feeling of this Virginian for his country.

Writing of secession, from Texas in the beginning of 1861, he said, "The South, in my opinion, has been aggrieved by the act of the North. I feel the aggression and am willing to take every proper step for redress. It is the principle I contend for, not individual or private interest. As an American citizen I take great pride in my country, her prosperity and institutions. But I can anticipate no greater calamity for this country than a dissolution of the Union. It would be an accumulation of all the evils we complain of, and I am willing to sacrifice everything but honor for its preservation. I hope, therefore, that all constitutional means will be exhausted before there is a resort to force. Secession is nothing but revolution. . . . Still a

* Letter of August 4th, 1856, cited in Jones's Lee, p. 80.

Union that can only be maintained by swords and bayonets, and in which strife and civil war are to take the place of brotherly love and kindness, has no charm for me. I shall mourn for my country, and for the welfare and progress of mankind. If the Union is dissolved and the government disrupted, I shall return to my native state and share the miseries of my people, and, save in defence, will draw my sword no more." *

The agonizing which he endured, when the crucial time came, may possibly never be known to us. All night nearly he paced his chamber floor alone, often seeking on his knees the guidance of the God he trusted in. But in the morning light had come.† His wife's family were strongly Union in their sentiments, and the writer has heard that powerful family influences were exerted to prevail on him to adhere to the Union side. "My husband has wept tears of blood," wrote Mrs. Lee to his old commander, Scott, who did him the justice to declare that he knew he acted under a compelling sense of duty.

His letters to his family and to his friends,

* Letter of January 23, 1861. Cited in Jones's "Life and Letters of R. E. Lee," p. 120.

† Jones's "Life and Letters of Robert E. Lee," p. 132.

though self-restrained, as was the habit of the man, show plainly to those who knew his character how stern was the sense of duty under which he acted when in his own person he had to meet the question whether he should take part against his native State. Unlike many other officers who knew no home but the post where they were quartered, Lee's home was in Virginia, and to this home in his most distant service his heart had ever yearned.

Lee had no personal interests to subserve connected with the preservation of the institution of slavery; his inclinations and his views all tended the other way. "In this enlightened age," he had already written, "there are few, I believe, but will acknowledge that slavery as an institution is a moral and political evil." He had set free the slaves he owned in his own right and was "in favor of freeing all the slaves in the South, giving to each owner a bond to be the first paid by the Confederacy when its independence should be secured." *

The slaves owned by Mrs. Lee he manumitted in 1862 or in January, 1863. In fact, it is a curi-

* "The Confederate Cause and Conduct in the War," p. 22; Offical Report of the History Committee, Grand Camp, C. V., by the late Hunter McGuire, M.D., LL.D., Richmond, Va. See also Lee's letter of December 27, 1856, "Life and Letters of Robert E. Lee"; Jones, p. 82.

ous commentary on the motives connected with the war that while Lee had set his slaves free, Grant is said to have continued in the possession of slaves until they were emancipated by the Government of the United States.*

It was, however, not so much the freeing of these slaves as the compassion and affection that breathe in his letters about them that testify his character. His care that every one should have his papers even though he might have gone off to the North; his provision for their wages; his solicitude for the weak and feeble among them; all testify to the feeling that the Virginia master had for his servants. His thoughts were constantly with his children—even amid the most arduous duties and the most perilous scenes his mind reverted to them. His letters from Mexico were full of them. On Christmas eve he, in his imagination, filled their stockings, as on another occasion; in lieu of his own children, from whom he was far distant, he acted Santa Claus and bought presents for all the children in the post. He ever kept in touch with his children, writing them of the interesting scenes through which he passed. To his eldest son, then a schoolboy, later

*Ibid., p. 23, note, where Mrs. Grant is given as authority, the statement that "these slaves came to him from my father's family; for I lived in the West when I married the General, who was then a Lieutenant in the Army."

a gallant and efficient soldier of high rank, he wrote, just after the Battle of Cerro Gordo,* how, in the battle, he had wondered while the musket balls and grape were whistling over his head in a perfect shower, where he could have put him if with him, to be safe. Indeed, all through his life children had a charm for him known only to the starved heart of a father exiled from his own fireside and little ones. To the day of his death, the entrance of a child was a signal for the dignified soldier to unbend, and among his latest companions in his retirement, when he was, perhaps, the most noted Captain in the world, were the little sunbonneted daughters of the professors of the college of which he was the President.

The crisis that came rent Virginia. It was known that in the event of war, should Virginia secede, her soil would become the battle ground. Lee had no illusion as to this; nor had he any illusion as to the fury and duration of the war if it should come. Whatever delusions others might cherish, he knew the Union thoroughly, and knew the temper and the mettle of the people of both sections. In the dread shadow of war the people of Virginia selected for the great convention, which was to decide the question of remaining in the Union or taking part with the

*Letter of April 25, 1847.

other Southern States, the most conservative men within her borders. Thus, the Virginia convention was a Whig body with a large majority of staunch Union men, the first Whig body that ever sat in the State.

Throughout its entire duration this great body of representative Virginians resisted all the influences that were brought to bear on it, both from the South and from the people of the State, who, under unreasoning provocation, gradually changed their opinion and began to clamor for secession. Only two weeks before the final act by which she severed her connection with the Union, she, by a two-thirds majority, rejected the idea of secession. A relief squadron sailed for Charleston while negotiations were going on, and preparations for war were being pushed which could only mean one thing. As a last and supreme effort to prevent war, Union men went to Washington to beg Mr. Lincoln to withdraw the garrisons of Sumter and Pickens, and understood him to say that he had been willing to take it under favorable consideration.* The reply when it came was the imperative call for troops to be furnished by the States. It meant war and the invasion of the

* Report of Joint Committee on Reconstruction. 1st Sess., 39th Cong., pp. 71, 114–115.

State. Even after Sumter was fired on, every effort was made by the State to bring about a reconciliation between the estranged and divided sections. But it was too late. Troops were already marching on her. The State did not make war. War was made on her. And under the shock Virginia, on the 17th day of April, solemnly reversed her former action and seceded from the Union she had done so much to create and so much to make great.

"To have acceded to the demand (for her quota of troops to attack South Carolina) would," says Henderson, "have been to abjure the most cherished principles of her political existence. . . . Neutrality was impossible. She was bound to furnish her tale of troops and thus belie her principles, or to secede at once and reject with a clean conscience the President's mandate. . . . The world has long since done justice to the motives of Cromwell and of Washington, and signs are not wanting that before many years have passed it will do justice to the motives of the southern people."

Speaking of Virginia's action specifically, he declares, "Her best endeavors were exerted to maintain the peace between the hostile sections, and not till her liberties were menaced did she repudiate a compact which had become intoler-

able. It was to preserve the freedom which her forefathers had bequeathed her, and which she desired to hand down unsullied to future generations, that she acquiesced in the revolution." *

"I can contemplate no greater calamity for the country than a dissolution of the Union," wrote Lee in January. In April the calamity had come. Virginia had been invaded and had risen to repel the invasion. The Union was dissolved in so far as his State was concerned.

Her action concluded her citizens. This was Lee's view, and it was the view of every man who sat in her Convention, Unionist and Secessionist. Ninety-nine out of every hundred of the intelligent men in what was known as Old Virginia, the great section east of the Alleghanies which had largely made her history, bowed to her decree and not with the less unanimity that a considerable element among them were grief-stricken at her decision to separate from the Union which their fathers had done so much to create.†

Among these was Robert E. Lee. Before him

* Henderson's "Life of Stonewall Jackson." I. pp. 101–2.

† The writer's father was a staunch Union man, and stood out against secession till the last; but three days after Virginia seceded he enlisted as a private in an infantry company, known as the "Patrick Henry Rifles," Co. C., 3d Va. Reg't, later 15th Va. Reg't, and fought through to Appomattox.

stood the example of his life-long model, Washington, who, having fought with Braddock under the English flag, when war came between England and his State, threw in his lot with his people. To him his thoughts recurred not only at this moment of supreme decision, but years afterwards in the seclusion of the little mountain-town, where he spent the evening of his days as the head of the academic institution which Washington had endowed.

Two or three days later, on the 20th of April, the same day on which he tendered the resignation of his command of his regiment of cavalry, he wrote to both his brother and sister, informing them of the grounds of his action. To his brother, with whom he had had an earnest consultation on the subject two days before, he stated that he had no desire ever again to draw his sword save in defence of his native State. To his sister he wrote:

"With all my devotion to the Union and the feeling of loyalty and duty of an American citizen, I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home. I have, therefore, resigned my commission in the army, and save in defence of my native State, with the sincere hope that my poor services may never be needed, I hope I

may never be called on to draw my sword. I know you will blame me; but you must think as kindly of me as you can, and believe that I have endeavored to do what I thought right."

All that we know is that, sacrificing place and honors and emoluments; leaving his home to the sack of the enemy already preparing to seize it, he decided in the sight of God, under the all-compelling sense of duty, and this is enough for us to know. His letter to General Scott tendering his resignation is full of noble dignity and not without a note of noble pathos. "I shall carry to the grave," he says in its conclusion, "the most grateful recollection of your kind consideration, and your name and fame will always be dear to me." And to his dying day he always held his old commander in undiminished affection.

Yet, however clear Lee was in his view as to his own duty, he left others to judge for themselves. Holding that the matter was one of conscience, he did not attempt to decide the momentous question for others—not even for his own son. Nearly a month after he had resigned (May 13, 1861), he wrote his wife, "Tell Custis he must consult his own judgment, reason, and conscience as to the course he may take. I do not wish him to be guided by my wishes or ex-

ample. If I have done wrong let him do better. The present is a momentous question, which every man must settle for himself and upon principle."

After the war, when he was, perhaps, the most famous captain of the world, he from time to time recurred to this action. For example, in a letter to General Beauregard, written the day after his entrance on his duties at Washington College, he refers to it.

"I need not tell you," he says, "that true patriotism sometimes requires men to act exactly contrary at one period to that which it does at another—and the motive which impels them—the desire to do right—is precisely the same. History is full of illustrations of this. Washington himself is an example. [He was ever his example.] He fought at one time against the French under Braddock, in the service of the King of Great Britain; at another he fought with the French at Yorktown, under the orders of the Continental Congress, against him. He has not been branded by the world with reproach for this; but his course has been applauded."

To the Committee of Congress before which he was called after the war, he stated that he resigned because he believed that the act of Vir-

ginia in withdrawing herself from the United States carried him along with it as a citizen of Virginia, and that her laws and acts were binding upon him.*

On one other occasion he stated his motives in his action at this crisis.† He says, "I must give you my thanks for doing me the justice to believe that my conduct during the last five years has been governed by my sense of duty. I had no other guide, nor had I any other object than the defence of those principles of American Liberty upon which the Constitutions of the several States were originally founded, and unless they are strictly observed I fear there will be an end to Republican Government in this country."

While the harpies were screaming and clamoring; and blind partisanry was declaiming about leaving him to the "avenging pen of History," his high soul dwelt in the serene air of consciousness of duty performed. He said to General Wade Hampton in June, 1869, "I could have taken no other course save in dishonor, and if it were all to be gone over again I should act in precisely the same way."

* Report of Joint Com. on Reconstruction, 1st Sess., 39th Cong., p. 133.

† In a letter of July 9, 1866, to an old friend in Illinois, Captain James May.

Thus spoke his constant soul. It was his deliberate judgment on calm reflection, with all the consequences known to him. As before writing it he cast his mind back he must have seen everything in the clear light of the inexorable past—the sacrifice of the chief command of the Union armies, with a great fleet at his back to keep open his lines of communication, hold the world for his recruiting ground, and blockade the enemy's country until starvation forced capitulation. It had lifted Grant from poverty and obscurity to the Presidency, while his own choice, to follow his State and obey her sacred laws, had reduced him from station and affluence to poverty and toil. His beautiful home had been confiscated and turned into a cemetery, and its priceless treasures, endeared by association with Washington, had been seized and scattered. A trial for treason had been threatened and the furious pack were yet trying to hunt him down. Yet there was no repining—no questioning. "There was quietness in that man's mind." When the sky was darkened he had simply lighted the candles and gone on with his duty.

"Duty is the sublimest word in our language," he had declared long before, and by it as a pilot-star he ever steered his steadfast course, abiding

with calm satisfaction whatever issue God decreed.

"We are conscious that we have humbly tried to do our duty," he said, about a year after the war; "we may, therefore, with calm satisfaction trust in God and leave results to him."

In this devotion to duty and calm reliance on God lay the secret of his life. The same spirit animated his great lieutenant. "Duty belongs to us, consequences belong to God," said Jackson. The same spirit animated the men who followed them. It was the teaching of the Southern home, which produced the type of character, the deep foundations of which were devotion to duty and reliance on God.

CHAPTER IV

RESOURCES

AND now, dealing with the fruits of character, we come to the proposition, whether Lee was, as some have claimed, a great captain only for defensive operations, or was a great captain without reservation or limitation—one of the great captains of history whose genius was equal to every exigency of war to which human genius may rise.

The question involved is of his greatness both as a soldier and as a man. And to some extent it reaches far beyond the confines of the South and involves the basic traits of race and of civilization. It was nobly said by Mr. Charles Francis Adams, Sr., to whom almost as much as to Lincoln or Grant the final result of the war was due, when, as the representative of the United States in England, he was challenged on an occasion with the argument that the armies of the South had defeated the armies of the North, and was asked what he had to say about it, "That they also are my countrymen." Thus,

Lee's genius and Lee's fame are the possession of the whole country and the whole race which his virtue honored.

We may ask ourselves first, what constitutes a great captain? The question takes us far into the records of both War and Peace. To most men the answer will come by the process of recalling the few—the very few—whom history has by universal consent placed in the first rank. They are Alexander, Hannibal, Cæsar, Frederick, and Napoleon, with Cromwell, Turenne, Eugene, Gustavus, Marlborough, Washington, Wellington, in a class so close to them in fame as to leave in doubt the rank to which at least one or two of them should be assigned. And on their heels crowd a concourse of captains great and victorious, yet easily distinguishable from the first, if confusingly close on the others.

Napoleon reckoned, as his masters for constant study, the first four and Gustavus, Turenne and Eugene.

Among the modern captains stand two conspicuous Americans: Washington, whose greatness proved equal to every exaction and who gave promise that he would have commanded successfully under all conditions that might have arisen; and the persistent, indomitable Grant, victor of Vicksburg, Missionary Ridge

and Appomattox, not so brilliant as Marlborough or Frederick, for no flashing stroke of genius like Blenheim or Leuthen adorned his record, but able, resourceful, constant, indomitable, like Scipio or Cromwell.

What placed those few men in the first rank before all others? Not final success. For though success final and absolute crowned most of them, final and irrevocable defeat was the last reward of others and these the greatest: Hannibal and Napoleon. Such rank then was won notwithstanding final defeat; and in reckoning its elements, final success bears no definite part.

Studying these captains closely, what gifts do we discern in all, divided as they were by centuries and by the equally vast gulf of racial differences? First, Imagination—the divine imagination to conceive a great cause and the means to support it. It may be to conquer the world; or Rome; or Europe. I conceive that it was this supreme gift that led Alexander to sleep with the casket-set of the Illiads under his pillow with his dagger and to declare them the best compendium of the soldier's art.

Next there must be the comprehensive grasp that seizes and holds firmly great campaigns in their completeness together with the mastery of every detail in their execution, both great and

small. There must be a tireless mind in a tireless body, informed with zeal; incarnate energy; the mental, moral and physical courage in complete and overpowering combination to compel men to obedience, instant and loyal under all conditions whatsoever; to inspire them with new forces and the power to carry out orders through every possible chance and change. These give the grand strategy. Its foundation is the combination in a brave soldier of a rare imagination and of a rarer intellect. No amount of fighting power or of capacity for calling it forth in others proves this endowment. In the Napoleonic wars, "Ney and Blücher," says Henderson, "were probably the best fighting generals of France and Prussia. But neither could be trusted to conduct a campaign." *

Then there must be the supreme constancy to withstand every shock of surprise or defeat without a tremor or a doubt, before which mere courage becomes paltry, and constant, imminent danger dwindles to a bare incident, serving only to quicken the spirit and fan its last ember to a consuming flame.

With these must exist an intuitive and profound knowledge of human nature and of men, singly and in combination; power to divine the

* Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," I., p. 93.

adversary's every design and to fathom his deepest intention; equal to every exigency, amounting to inspiration; all culminating in the power to foresee, to prepare for, divine and seize the critical moment and win where others would lose, or, having lost, save where others would be destroyed; and equally profound and exact knowledge of the art of war as practised by the great masters of all ages. And finally, fusing all in one complete and harmonious whole, crowning this whole with the one final and absolute essential must be the God-given personal endowment of genius; undefined, undefinable; sometimes flaming at the very first, sometimes slumbering through years to burst forth at some moment of supreme crisis; sometimes hardly recognized until its light is caught down the long perspective of the years, but when caught recognized as genius.

Without this a man may be a great captain, a victorious captain; but not the greatest or among the greatest.

Thus, we come to the measure of Lee's greatness as a captain.

The measure of a captain's abilities must rest, at last, on his achievement as gauged by his resources.

Let us see what Lee accomplished with his

means; then we shall be the better able to reckon the measure of his success. Let us turn aside for a moment for the consideration of a few figures. They are a dry and unpalatable diet, but, after all, it was to the science of arithmetic that the South yielded at the end.

The South began the war with a white population of about 5,500,000. Of these her military population numbered about 1,065,000.*

The North began the war with a white population of about 22,000,000. Of these her fighting men, whom she could call into the field, numbered about 3,900,000.†

The South enlisted about 900,000. The North enrolled of her fighting men about 1,700,000;‡ besides which she enlisted of foreigners about 700,000, and of negroes about 186,000.

The North had an organized National Government with all departments—State, War, Navy, Treasury and Justice, perfectly organized and equipped, while the South had to organize her Confederated Government. The North had about

* Besides these she had a servile population of about 3,500,000, of which a certain proportion were available for raising subsistence for the army.

† Besides, of the negroes the North drew into her armies about 186,000, they being the most able-bodied of this class.

‡ *Cf.* "Numbers and Losses in the Civil War in America," pp. 40 and 50. Colonel Thomas L. Livermore. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

$11,000,000,000 of taxable values as against about $5,000,000,000 in the South, of which $2,000,000,000 was represented by the slaves. The North had by far the best means of transportation, a large percentage of the efficient railways and the means of railway equipment.

In addition to this the North had nearly all the manufactures, and possessed a superiority in equipment that is incalculable. When the war broke out, the South could scarcely manufacture a tin-cup or a frying-pan, a railway-iron, a wool-card, or a carpenter's tool. The North possessed nearly the whole old Navy, the naval forces, and the population from which the seamen were drawn. And finally and above all, the North had the ear of the world.

With this superiority she was enabled to blockade the South and lock her within her own confines, while the world was open to her and she could await with what patience she could command, the fatal result of "the policy of attrition."

No adequate account of the value of the Navy to the Union side has ever been given, or, at least, has ever reached the public ear. Had the Navy been on the side of the Confederacy instead of on the Union side, it is as certain that the South would have made good her position

as is any other fact established by reason. The Navy with its 200,000 men enabled the Union not only to seal up the South against all aid from without, but to penetrate into the heart of the Confederacy, command her interior waters and form at once the base of supplies for the Union Armies when advancing and their protection when defeated.*

It is not meant to imply that figures give an exact statement of the problem that was worked out during the war; but they cast a light upon it which contributes greatly to its just comprehension.

In round numbers the South had on her muster-rolls, from first to last, less than 900,000 men. And in this list the South had all she could muster; for, at the last, she had enlisted in her reserves all men between sixteen and sixty years. In round numbers the North had 2,700,000, and besides, had all Europe as her recruiting field.†

* *Cf.* Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," I., Chap. V., p. 113. "Judicious indeed," he says, "was the policy which at the very outset of the war brought the tremendous pressure of the sea-power to bear against the South."

† Col. Thomas L. Livermore of Boston, author of the notable work, "Numbers and Losses," in a letter to the writer, says, "I suppose that it would be safe to assume that eighty per cent. (of the enlistments) would hold in all the Northern States. This would give about 2,234,000 individuals in the army. The Record

When the war closed, the South had in the field, throughout her territory, but 175,000 men opposed to the armies of the North, numbering 980,000 men.*

and Business Bureau, in its memorandum of 1896, computed the average estimates of reënlistments by different authorities at 543,393."

The Confederate forces he estimates at "1,239,000, the number shown by the census to have been within the conscript age, less the number of exempts (partly estimated and partly recorded), and an estimate of the natural deaths; or at about 1,000,000 estimated proportionally to the killed and wounded in the two armies." It will be seen that his first estimate above takes no account of the numbers of Southerners in the mountain regions who sided with the Union.

Gen. Marcus J. Wright places the total number of the Southern troops at less than 700,000. The total number within the conscript age he places at 1,000,065.

Henderson, in his "Life of Stonewall Jackson," estimates them at about 900,000.

I have felt that possibly this trained and impartial soldier of another nation might have arrived at a fairer estimate than any one on this side the Atlantic.

For calculations of Col. Livermore and General Wright, see Appendix A.

*Of 346,744 Federal soldiers examined for military service after March 6, 1863, sixty-nine per cent were Americans, the rest were foreigners. In the 35th Massachusetts Regiment, which, says Henderson, may be taken as a typical Northern regiment, of 495 recruits received during 1864, 400 were German immigrants. —Henderson's "Life of Stonewall Jackson," 1st Ed., I., p. 466.

The South, or rather those orators who stood as the economists of the South, had supposed that her cotton and tobacco were so necessary to the rest of the world that the European nations would take her part, out of plain consideration for their own welfare. It was a great error. The value of the cotton crop exported in 1860 was $202,741,351. In 1861, it was $42,000,000. In 1862, it was $4,000,000. After that it was next to nothing.

Towards the close of the war the South was well nigh stripped naked, and for what was left she had no means of transportation. She had no nitre for her powder; no brass for her percussion caps; the very kettles and stills from the plantations had been used; and when it was necessary to repair one railroad as a line for transportation, to meet the emergency the best rails were taken up from another road less important.

The commissariat and the quartermaster's department were bad enough. Study of the matter will, however, convince any one that at the very last it was rather owing to the desperate condition of the lines of transportation than to mere inefficiency of the commissariat and the quartermaster's department, to which it has been so often charged, that Lee failed to carry out his final plan of effecting a junction with Johnston.*

In fact, from the first, a considerable proportion of the equipment of the Southern armies and all of their best equipment had been captured by them on the field of battle. So regular had been their application to this source of supply that, says Henderson in his "Life of

* I can remember my surprise as a boy at seeing wagons hauling straw from my home to Petersburg, sixty-odd miles, through roads the like of which, I trust in Grace, do not now exist in the United States.

Stonewall Jackson," "the dishonesty of the Northern contractors was a constant source of complaint among the soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia."

An English soldier and critic, Colonel Lawler, writing in *Blackwood's Magazine*, has declared his doubt whether any general of modern history could have sustained for four years—a longer time nowadays than Hannibal's fifteen years in Italy in times past—a war in which, possessed of scanty resources himself, he had against him so enormous an aggregate of men, horses, ships and supplies; it is an under, rather than an over estimate to state that during the first two years, the odds all told were ten to one, during the last two years, twenty to one, against the Confederates.*

Truly, then, said General Lee to General Early, in the winter of 1865–6, "It will be difficult to get the world to understand the odds against which we fought."

It is known by some in the South, the survivors of those armies who tracked the frozen roads of Virginia with bleeding feet; whose breakfast was often nothing but water from a road-side well and whose dinner nothing but a tightened belt. Some knew it who knew the war-swept

*Jones's "Lee," p. 75.

South in their boyhood, where the threat was that a crow flying over it should have to carry his rations, and the fact was more terrible than the prophecy.

But it is well for the race to make the world know it.

In the foregoing computation it is true enough to say that we have not reckoned all the resources of the South. She had Lee and she had Jackson; she had the men who followed them and the women who sustained those men. "Lee and Jackson," says Henderson, in his "Life of Stonewall Jackson," "were worth 200,000 men to any armies they commanded." Quoting Moltke's saying that the junction of two armies on the field of battle is the highest achievement of military genius, he says in comment: "Tried by this test alone, Lee stands out as one of the greatest soldiers of all time. Not only against Pope, but against McClellan at Gaines's Mill, against Burnside at Fredericksburg and against Hooker at Chancellorsville, he succeeded in carrying out the operations of which Moltke speaks." But this is not all. No reckoning of the opposing forces can be made without taking into account the men who followed Lee and Jackson, and the women who stayed at home and sustained them. No people ever gave more promptly to

their country's cause than did the old American element of the North, or would have been readier had occasion arisen to suffer on their country's behalf. But it is no disparagement of them to state the simple fact that the war did not reach them as a people as it reached the people of the South. Where a class gave at the North, the whole population of the South gave; whereas a fraction suffered at the North, the entire population of the South suffered. The rich grew to be as the poor, and, together with the poor, learned to know actual hunger. The delicately nurtured came to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. War in its most brutal and terrible form came to be known all over the land; known in disease without medicines; in life without the common necessaries of life; in ravaged districts; bombarded and blackened towns; burnt homesteads, terrorized and starving women and children. This the South came to know throughout a large extent of her territory. Yet, through it all, her people bore themselves with a constancy that must ever be a monument to them, and that even in the breast of those who were children in that stirring period must ever keep alive the hallowed memory of her undying resolution.

"All honor and praise to the fair Southern

women!" declared a Richmond paper in the closing days of 1862. "May the future historian when he comes to write of this war fail not to award them their due share of praise." No history of this war could be written without such due award. It is not too much to say that as brave and constant as were the intrepid soldiery that, with steadily wasting ranks, followed Lee from Seven Pines to Appomattox, even more brave and constant were the women who stayed at home. Gentle and simple, they gave their husbands, their brothers and their sons to the cause of the South, sorrowing chiefly that they themselves were too feeble to stand at their side. Hungering in body and heart they bore with more than a soldier's courage, more than a soldier's hardship, and to the last, undaunted and dauntless, gave them a new courage as with tear-dimmed eyes they sustained them in the darkest hours of their despondency and defeat.

Such were among the elements which even in the South's darkest hour Lee had at his back. From such elements Lee himself had sprung and in his character he was their supreme expression.

CHAPTER V

LEE IN WEST VIRGINIA

AND now, bearing clearly in mind what his resources were, we may approach the question intelligently: whether Lee was, as charged by some, great only in defence and when on interior lines and behind breast-works, or was really the greatest soldier of his time, and, perhaps, of the English-speaking race.

Immediately on his resignation from the Army of the United States, Lee was tendered by the Governor of Virginia the command of the forces of the State which was in the throes of preparation to repel the invasion of her territory, and on the 23d of April he received at the hands of the President of the State Convention the commission of Major-General of the Virginia forces. The President of the Convention, the Hon. John Janney, in a brief speech, recalling the example of Washington, announced to him the fact that the Convention had by a unanimous vote, expressed their conviction that among living Virginians he was

"first in war"; that they prayed he might so conduct the operations committed to his charge that it should soon be said of him that he was "first in peace," and that when that time came, he should have earned the still prouder distinction of being "first in the hearts of his countrymen." He further recalled to him that Washington in his will had given his swords to his favorite nephews with an injunction that they should never be drawn from their scabbards except in self-defence or in defence of the rights and liberties of their country.

He said in closing, "Yesterday your mother Virginia placed her sword in your hand, upon the implied condition that we know you will keep to the letter and in spirit, that you will draw it only in defense and that you will fall with it in your hand rather than the object for which it was placed there should fail."

To this Lee replied in the following simple words: "Mr. President and gentlemen of the Convention: Profoundly impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, for which I must say I was not prepared, I accept the position assigned me by your partiality. I would have much preferred that your choice had fallen upon an abler man. Trusting in Almighty God, an approving conscience and the aid of my

fellow-citizens, I devote myself to the service of my native State, in whose behalf alone will I ever again draw my sword."

Thus, passing into the service of his native State in the dire hour of her need, Lee was appointed a Major-General of Virginia's forces to resist the invasion of Virginia's soil, and it was not until war was flagrant throughout the land, and Virginia had been actually invaded that he became an officer of the Confederate States.

His first service was to put Virginia in a posture of defence. That he promptly effected this was shown on the plain of Manassas on July 21st. He was the third in rank of the Major-Generals appointed by Mr. Davis, and to this fact was due his assignment to Western Virginia.

Indeed, it is stated that so far was General Lee from being influenced by any considerations of a selfish nature that when Virginia joined the Southern Confederacy and left him without rank, he seriously contemplated enlisting in the company of cavalry commanded by his son.*

The game, as it appears now to all and as it appeared then to those who had to shoulder the responsibility of playing it, was, on the one side, the sealing up of the South within its own borders; the suppression of the power of the Border

* Jones's "Life and Letters of Robert E. Lee."

States, such as Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri, to join the South, and the cutting in two of the section already seceded; on the other, it was the simple maintenance of the status quo of the seceded section; the power to exercise the right of secession in the Border States; and the resistance of invasion. There was no claim on the part of the South to the right of invasion and no thought of invasion of the North until the exactions of war made it necessary as a counterstroke. Even after the victory of Manassas the Confederate Government held back the eager Jackson and sustained the prudent Johnston. Such being the game it was played on both sides with clear vision and impressive determination. And no one saw more clearly than Lee the magnitude of the impending struggle.

Of Lee's far-sightedness we have signal proof in his letters. While others discussed the war as a matter of days and occasion for a summer holiday, he, with wider knowledge and clearer prevision, reckoned its duration at full four years, and possibly at even ten. It is said that one of the few speeches he ever made was that in which, responding to urgent calls from a crowd assembled at a railway station to see him, he, in a few grave sentences, bade them go home and prepare for a long and terrible war.

"We must make up our minds," he wrote in February of 1862, "to meet with reverses and to overcome them. But the contest must be long and the whole country has to go through much suffering." *

His views on the matter of the Trent were as sound as though he had been trained in diplomacy all his life. "I think," he writes, "the United States Government, notwithstanding this moral and political commitment at Wilkes' act, if it finds that England is earnest, and that it will have to fight or retract, will retract. We must make up our minds to fight our battles ourselves, expect to receive aid from no one, and make every necessary sacrifice of money, comfort and labor to bring the war to a successful close. The cry is too much for help. I am mortified to hear it. We want no aid. We want to be true to ourselves, to be prudent, just and bold." †

The first steps taken at the North were to blockade the Southern ports from the Chesapeake to the Rio Grande with the efficient navy of the Union; to seize the Mississippi and to overawe the Border States.

* Letters to Mrs. Lee, dated April 30, 1861, and February 8, 1862. Jones's "Lee," p. 150.

† Letter to his son, Gen. G. W. C. Lee, December 29, 1861.

The western portion of Virginia, traversed by the great Appalachian Range stretching in a vast barrier across the State, and penetrated only by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, had, partly by reason of the origin and character of the population, partly by reason of their direct association with the North and West, but mainly owing to the absence of slaves among them, been unaffected by the causes which created the friction between the North and South. Here in this mountainous and substantially non-slaveholding region, bordering on the States of Ohio and Pennsylvania, and mainly trading by way of the Ohio River and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad with the North and West, the population was almost as strongly Union in sentiment as that of the States with which they marched, and, finally, when the conflict came, the major portion of the population sided with the North and stood for the Union. And here McClellan, outmatching the commands and the commanders opposed to him, soon showed substantial success for the Union side.

The importance of securing this great section of the leading Southern State was manifest to both sides, and from the first troops were thrown into the State by both sides to control and hold it. General Garnett had been

early dispatched with a command to protect the western border, and awe into submission the wavering and the disaffected. The course of events, however, had made the eastern rather than the western border of this section the seat of operations, with Harper's Ferry and Winchester as the key to the situation, and when Harper's Ferry, soon after the first outbreak of war, fell into the hands of the Federal troops, McClellan had seized the passes that commanded the western region and fortified them strongly. The gallant Garnett had fallen soon after the evacuation of Harper's Ferry, and Rosecrans, who had succeeded to the command of the troops dispatched to hold Western Virginia on McClellan's being transferred to Washington, was now leading an invading force up the Kanawha, while Reynolds was posted on the Cheat River to guard the chief avenue of communication between the East and the West.

The Confederate forces in this mountainous region were divided into several detachments, two of them on the Kanawha under command, respectively, of Generals Floyd and Wise, and two others farther eastward under Generals Loring and H. R. Jackson, among whom the spirit of cooperation left much to be desired. Owing part-

ly to the hostility of the population and partly to the lack of harmony among the commanding officers, the cause of the South steadily waned in this trans-Alleghany region, and in July, after Johnston had been offered the command in this territory and had declined the billet, General Lee was sent out to Western Virginia to take command of the somewhat disorganized forces in that hostile region. His reputation, gained among the mountains of Mexico, was doubtless one of the motives which ruled when he was assigned to duty among the mountains of Western Virginia; but even his abilities were not equal to conquering the conditions which he found prevailing there. Old soldiers with whom I have discussed the causes of the result of this campaign have never given wholly satisfactory reasons for it, but have felt assured that all that could have been accomplished Lee accomplished. They have felt that in the first place the dissensions of the officers previously in command had tended to demoralize the troops; then, that the sickness among the troops unaccustomed to the exposure or prostrated by an epidemic of typhoid fever, measles, and other diseases, impaired their efficiency, and finally, that the unlooked-for hostility of the population at large, in a region where it was difficult, at best, to maintain lines

of communication, now in a season unprecedently wet, which rendered the roads impassable, combined with lack of means of transportation to frustrate the plans of even as capable a commander as Lee.

Lee's report makes mention of the difficulty of maintaining his lines of communication owing to the exhausted condition of his horses and the impossibility of obtaining supplies; so it may be assumed that this was in his view the chief reason for the failure of the campaign.

The first object of Lee's offensive operations was the destruction of Reynolds, posted on Cheat Mountain. The movement, however, proved a failure because the frontal attack, which was to be the signal for the assault intended to be made by the body of troops sent by night across the mountains to attack Reynolds' position in the rear, was not made as ordered by Lee, and the flanking force, having had their ammunition damaged and their provisions destroyed by a furious storm which raged all night, missing the concerted signal, returned across the mountains without making the expected assault. If any one else was to blame for this failure to carry out Lee's well-conceived plan, the commander, with the magnanimity characteristic of him, simply passed it by as he later did similar

failures on the part of his subordinates, assuming himself whatever blame attached to the failure.

The second opportunity which apparently offered itself and was allowed by Lee to pass fruitlessly by, was when Rosecrans' army, which lay before him at Sewell's Mountain was allowed to slip away unmolested. Lee gave as his reason for his apparent non-action, that he was confident of defeating Rosecrans by a flanking movement which he had planned for the following night and that he "could not afford to sacrifice five or six hundred of his people to silence public clamor."

The "public clamor" over Lee's failure was bitter and persistent, but he remained unruffled by it. With characteristic calm he simply stated that it was "only natural that such hasty conclusions should be reached," and gave his opinion that it was "better not to attempt a justification or defence but to go steadily on in the discharge of our duty to the best of our ability, leaving all else to the calmer judgment of the future and to a kind Providence."

Happily for the South, Mr. Davis knew Lee better than those who were so clamorous against him, and the autumn having closed the campaign in Western Virginia, Lee was dispatched

to the South to design and construct a general system of coast-defences along the Atlantic seaboard, a duty in which he displayed such genius that he rendered the coast cities of Georgia and South Carolina impregnable against all assaults by sea, and, protected by his chain of forts, they stood as memorials of his genius until Sherman with his victorious army attacked them by land. His letters give a clear picture of the difficulties of protecting these seaport towns against a navy without some sort of navy to oppose it.

This duty performed, Lee, in the shadow of the vast preparations making at Washington, for a great invasion of Virginia, was called back to Richmond to advise the President of the Confederacy, and the need was urgent, for McClellan, with Johnston falling back slowly before him, was marching steadily up the Peninsula, with an army the like of which had never been commanded by one man.

The first campaign in which Lee engaged, like Washington's first campaign, was thus conducted with adverse fortune. Had Washington's military career closed after the retreat from Long Island, he would have been reckoned simply a brave man and a stark fighter, but one unequal to general command. Had Lee's career ended after the campaign in Western Virginia, when he

was derisively characterized in the anti-administration press of Richmond, as "Evacuating Lee," he would have been known in history only as a fine organizer, a capital scout, and a brilliant engineer of unusual gallantry, whose abilities as a commander were not superior to those of the mediocre officer who opposed him in that experimental campaign, and were possibly equal only to the command of a brigade, or at best, of a division. But the South and Fame awaited his opportunity.

As soon as Lee was brought back from the South, and was again appointed military adviser to the President, he revolutionized the plan of campaign hitherto followed. His clear vision saw the imperative necessity of substituting an aggressive for a defensive policy, and he unleashed the eager Jackson on the armies in the Valley of Virginia, keeping them fully occupied and so alarming Washington as to hold McDowell on the north side of the Rappahannock. Within a month after he was placed in command he perfected his plans and fell upon McClellan and defeated the greatest army that had ever stood on American soil. The next three years proved beyond cavil that in the first campaign, as always, all that could have been done with his forces by any one, was done by

Lee. Within one year, indeed, he had laid the foundation of a fame, as a great captain, as enduring as Marlborough's or Wellington's.

Three years from this time "this colonel of cavalry" surrendered a muster-roll of 26,000 men; of which barely 8,000 muskets showed up, to an army of over 130,000 men, commanded by the most determined and able general that the North had found, and, defeated, sheathed his sword with what will undoubtedly become the reputation of the greatest captain and the noblest character of his time.

In this period he had fought three of the greatest campaigns in all the history of war and destroyed the reputation of more generals than any captain had ever done in the same space of time. His last campaign alone, even ending as it did in defeat, would have sufficed to fix him forever as a star of the first magnitude in the constellation of great captains. Though he succumbed at last to the "policy of attrition" pursued by his patient and able antagonist, it was not until Grant had lost in the campaign over 124,000 men, two men for every one that Lee had in his army from the beginning of the campaign.

CHAPTER VI

THE SITUATION WHEN LEE TOOK COMMAND

WHEN McClellan moved on Richmond, the fortunes of the South appeared to be at a lower ebb than they ever were again until the winter of 1864.

The general plan for prosecution of the war on the part of the North was the same that had been laid down at the beginning: that is, to hold the Border States; to blockade the Southern ports and attack by sea; and to seize the navigable rivers running far up into her territory, especially the Mississippi, and thereby cut the South in two. By the end of spring, 1862, nearly the whole of this far-reaching and sagacious plan had been measurably accomplished. Maryland, Missouri and Kentucky had been held firmly, and in all three States, except Missouri, Secession had been forcibly prevented, while Missouri had been substantially conquered.

The very next day, after the rout at Bull Run, Mr. Lincoln, awakening to the gravity of the situation, had called for 500,000 men, and the

North had responded with fervor. Between the 4th of August and the 10th of October more than 110 regiments and 30 battalions, comprising at least 112,000 men, were added to the forces in Washington and its neighborhood.* The ablest organizer in the army had been called to the task of organization, and proved to have a genius for it. All autumn and winter he labored at the work and when spring came Washington had been strongly fortified, and McClellan found himself at the head of possibly the largest, best equipped and best drilled army ever commanded by one man in modern times.

The spring of 1862 had been spent by the Government of the United States in preparation for a campaign which should retrieve the errors and disasters of the preceding year and, by making certain the capture of Richmond, "the heart of the Confederacy," should end the war by one great and decisive stroke. It was well said that without McClellan there had been no Grant.

Several plans for attacking Richmond presented themselves, all of which included the idea of cutting off the city from communication with the Southwest. One was by way of the Shenandoah Valley, striking the Virginia

* Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," I, p. 167.

Central Railroad at Staunton or Waynesboro; and marching on Richmond by way of Charlottesville, whence a railway line ran to Southwest Virginia and Tennessee; one by way of Manassas; one by the Chesapeake Bay and the lower Rappahannock; and finally one by way of the Chesapeake Bay and the peninsula lying between the York and the James, which presented the opportunity under certain contingencies of seizing Petersburg and isolating Richmond from the South.

The practicability of all of these plans of invasion had to be considered quite as carefully in Richmond as in Washington, and the possibility of each one of them being adopted had to be provided against. As the junction at Manassas had proved to be the key to the situation in the first effort, and its use had enabled the Valley forces to be brought across the Blue Ridge in the nick of time for the final movement in the battle there, so it still remained the most important point in Central Virginia, and Johnston's army was placed there to guard it and at the same time keep Washington in a state of anxiety. The Washington authorities were in favor of trying their fortune against this point. McClellan, however, favored the route by the Rappahannock. McClellan's first plan

was to march to Annapolis and then transport his army, 140,000 men, to Urbana, on the south bank of the Rappahannock and "occupy Richmond before it could be strongly reinforced." *

This plan he was forbidden to adopt, though he considered it the best of all the plans, and he thereupon selected the route by way of Fortress Monroe and the Peninsula, against the views of the Government authorities, who greatly desired him to adopt the overland route by Manassas across which Johnston lay with an army then believed to number over 100,000 men; but really containing certainly less than half that number.†

Illness during the autumn and early winter of 1861 prevented McClellan's acting with the efficiency which he might otherwise have shown; but even more disastrous than this was his determination not to move until he had an army sufficiently great and properly organized to make his success assured. For this reason mainly he resisted alike the importunities of the President and the Secretary of War and the clamor of the public until on toward the spring; by which time he had sacrificed the good will of the former and the confidence of both.

* John C. Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," I, p. 266, citing McClellan's letter to Stanton. 5 W. R., 45. † Ibid.

Jackson settled the question of the Shenandoah Valley plan by the battle of Winchester and his brilliant retreat between two converging armies down the Valley, followed by the victory of Port Republic. The authorities in Washington decided against the Lower Rappahannock plan and gave McClellan his choice between the overland route by way of Manassas, and the Fortress Monroe plan, and he states that "of course he selected the latter," adding a jibe at the fears of the administration and a suggestion of their disloyalty to him.*

This decision was reached by him in the first week in March, and on the 9th of March Johnston, under orders from Mr. Davis, withdrew his army from Manassas and fell back to the Rappahannock and thence toward Richmond, immediately on which McClellan occupied Manassas with the greater part of his army,† to give them training and with a view to opening the railway from Manassas, where Banks's headquarters were to be, to Strasburg in the Shenandoah Valley. About the middle of March McClellan began to ship his troops to Fortress Monroe, a movement which proceeded rapidly, and Johnston, thereupon, "his movements con-

* "McClellan's Own Story," p. 227.

† Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," I, p. 255.

trolled by McClellan," marched to the Peninsula, where Magruder with only some 13,000 men at Yorktown had handled them so ably that McClellan was led to believe his force much larger than it was. Unwilling to leave such a force on his flank McClellan had sat down to besiege Yorktown and was held there until the beginning of May (3d), when, on the eve of his assault, Magruder marched out and fell back on Williamsburg, where a sharp fight occurred, resulting in a victory for the Federal General, though the Confederate Army was withdrawn intact.

The possession of a fleet gave to the Union forces the command of the Chesapeake, of the Potomac, of the York and (after the sinking of the *Merrimac* by her commander) of the James to within a day's march of Richmond.

In January Thomas had won the battle of Mill Springs in Kentucky, which made the Union forces dominant in that region. In February (6th) Fort Henry, on the Tennessee, had been captured, and four days later (the 10th) Fort Donelson, on the Cumberland, had surrendered unconditionally to a general hitherto almost unknown, to whom the Government had been inclined to turn the cold shoulder, but who was to become better known thereafter. By

these victories the upper Mississippi, the Cumberland and the Tennessee came into the control of the Federal forces, and all that was needed was to obtain mastery of the lower Mississippi to leave the Confederacy rent in twain. The forts at Hatteras Inlet had been reduced in August (28th). Hilton Head and Beaufort, in North Carolina had been captured, following Admiral DuPont's reduction of the forts on Port Royal Inlet; and Roanoke Island and Newberne, N. C., had been captured in the first half of March, 1862. On April 6th, Albert Sydney Johnston, deemed up till now the South's most brilliant soldier, had substantially won a battle against the captor of Forts Henry and Donelson, but had been shot in the hour of victory, and that night, Buell having reached the field with fresh troops, the Confederate forces had been in turn defeated. It is probable that but for the fall of Johnston, who bled to death through neglecting his wound in his eagerness to push his victory on the 6th, Grant's fortunate star might have set at Shiloh instead of rising higher and higher in the next three years to reach its zenith at Appomattox. As it was, the upper Mississippi, with its great tributaries, was in complete control of the Union, and on April 24th Flag Officer Farra-

gut, himself a Tennessean, with a powerful fleet, ran up the Mississippi, successfully passing the forts (Jackson and St. Philip) guarding its mouth, and reached New Orleans, which city was soon occupied by Butler (May 1st), its fall being quickly followed by the fall of Pensacola. By this time all the important Florida seaport towns were in the possession of the Federal forces, and all these captures, except Roanoke Island and Newberne had been effected by the navy.* Thus, the Mississippi was open from its mouth to Port Hudson, and even that fort and the yet more threatening forts at Vicksburg could be passed by the Federal gunboats, though not without danger, which it was important to put an end to. The main object of attack now was Richmond.

Thus, as the spring closed the Confederate Capital was menaced by an army which had cleared the Peninsula of its adversaries and was believed to be capable of taking Richmond whenever its general saw fit to deliver his assault. Feeling sure of it, McClellan approached leisurely up the north bank of the Chickahominy and entrenched his army in the positions he secured from time to time, until he was within sight of the spires of Richmond, and on quiet nights his

* Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," pp. 182–5.

pickets could hear the sound of the city's bells pealing the hours. McDowell, with 40,000 men, was on the Rappahannock, not seventy miles away, and was under stringent orders to effect a junction with McClellan, who, to get in touch with him and protect his base at West Point on the York, had reached out on the north side of the Chickahominy as far as Hanover Court House and the North Anna. Two armies, one under Banks in the Valley of Virginia, and the other under Fremont to the westward, were keeping Stonewall Jackson so fully engaged that he was making marches which gained for his infantry the appellation of "foot-cavalry," and to hold his own, he was forced to win two battles in one day. Johnston had, in face of McClellan's steady advance, fallen back on Richmond, and finding McClellan's army divided by the swollen Chickahominy had, on May 31st, attacked his left under Keyes at Seven Pines and driven him back to Fair Oaks, possibly missing a complete victory only by reason of Longstreet's slowness; then having been severely wounded he had been forced to leave the field, and next day a renewal of the attack under General G. W. Smith had resulted in a repulse. And in this crisis Lee was placed in command.

The situation at Richmond, when in succession to Johnston Lee was appointed in command of the army there on the 1st day of June, was substantially this. The Confederate troops lying between Richmond and McClellan's army numbered about 70,000 men. A steady retreat up the Peninsula had tended to impair their spirit if not their morale. The single check given to McClellan at Williamsburg had resulted in nothing more practical than to allow time for the retirement on Richmond, and to teach McClellan a wholesome lesson of respect for his enemy. The attack at Seven Pines, on the afternoon of May 31st, had been so gallantly pressed that it had resulted in a victory, but not the complete victory that had been expected; for owing to Longstreet's slowness and possibly to his half-heartedness, which on the 31st led him to wait until the afternoon before making the assault planned for the morning and thereby allowed Sumner to cross the falling Chickahominy and save Keyes, and on the next day led him to attack Sumner with only three brigades instead of his full force, the victory of the 31st had been followed by the repulse at Fair Oaks next day, when General G. W. Smith commanded. In the same way, a few weeks later, as Henderson points out, he became

responsible for the frontal battle of Malvern Hill.

The capture of Norfolk, followed by the command of the Peninsula, had opened the James River as high up as Drury's Bluff only a few miles below Richmond and had given McClellan command of the river to that point, thus opening to him two bases of supply on the York and the James respectively, accessible by water.

The fortunes of the Confederacy in the West and along the seaboard, as we have seen, were at this time at a low ebb, and McClellan now was apparently sure of the capture of the Confederate Capital. Should it fall, Virginia was likely to be overrun by the forces of the Union, and the principal seat of war would be the South or the West. McClellan's army numbered about 110,000 men, now well organized and fairly seasoned; his equipment was as good as the world could furnish, and he believed himself, and he was believed to be, a young Napoleon. McDowell's army composed of 40,000 men, until a portion of it was sent to protect Washington, was at Fredericksburg, only sixty miles away, clamorous to join him, and under orders to do so, while already in the Shenandoah Valley, or ready to march thither, was

Fremont with 20,000 men, all operating to unite and fall on Richmond.

Such, in brief, was the situation when Lee assumed command on June 1st, 1862. His prestige at this time was far from being what it soon afterward became, or even what it had been previous to the outbreak of the war. His ability as an engineer was recognized; but the proof of a general is victories, and that proof he had not given.

CHAPTER VII

BATTLES AROUND RICHMOND

LEE, thus called from the titular position of Military Adviser to the President* to the command of the army defending Richmond, to take the place of Johnston, found himself in command of about 80,000 men, 70,000 being close by, while McClellan had not less than 110,000. From that moment the army felt a new hand and acknowledged its master. His first act was one which should dispel the delusion that he was great only in defensive operations.

Massing his troops suddenly on the north side of the Chickahominy and calling Stonewall Jackson from the Valley to meet him at a given point at a given hour, he fell upon McClellan's entrenchments and rolled him back to the upland plain of Malvern Hill. Was it on the defensive or the offensive that he acted when he conceived and carried through to supreme success those masterly tactics? Was he acting on the defensive or offensive when again, dashing upon him

* June 1, 1862.

on the entrenched uplands of Malvern Hill, he swept him back to his gunboats, and shattered at once his plans and his prestige? It was a battle fought as Grant fought at second Cold Harbor, mainly by frontal attack; and, like the plan of second Cold Harbor, has been criticised as costing needless waste of life. But, unlike Grant's futile and costly assaults, Malvern Hill, however bloody it was, proved successful. That night McClellan retreated to the shelter of his gunboats. Lee's audacious tactics saved Richmond. It was not until nearly three years had passed, and until hundreds of thousands of lives had been spent, and the seed-corn of the Confederate South had been ground in the ever-grinding mills of war, that a Union picket ever again got a glimpse of the spires of Richmond or any Union soldier, other than a prisoner of war, heard her church bells pealing in the quiet night.

It had long been plain to Lee's clear vision that the best defence of Virginia's Capital was an offensive movement which should menace the Federal Capital, and as early as April 29th he had suggested to Stonewall Jackson, then operating in the Valley of Virginia, a threatening counter-move, to prevent, if possible, McDowell from crossing the Rappahannock. Two weeks before the battle of Seven Pines he had again

prompted Jackson to move on Banks, and, if successful, drive him back toward the Potomac and create the impression that he intended to threaten that line, a movement in which Jackson was completely successful. Thus, Lee had, with the aid of his able Lieutenant, stopped the armies of Fremont and McDowell from any attempt to reinforce McClellan, and was ready when the moment came to carry out his far-reaching plan to defeat and possibly destroy by one swift blow McClellan's great army now lying at the gates of Richmond and holding both sides of the Chickahominy.

It is no part of the plan of this book to discuss in detail Lee's consummate tactics; but a bare outline of his far-seeing plan is necessary.

Johnston had attacked on the south side of the Chickahominy and failed to dislodge McClellan. What would Lee do? His first act was to retire his army to the original position held before the assault at Seven Pines and fortify on the south bank of the Chickahominy, to secure that side of the river while he prepared for his coup on the north bank against McClellan's right wing, commanded by the gallant Fitz John Porter. Thus, he had as his first move withdrawn his army even nearer Richmond than before. But he had no idea of remaining

there idle while McClellan prepared to dislodge him. To secure accurate information he dispatched Stuart with a small force (about 1,200 cavalry and a battery of horse artillery)* to investigate around his right flank, and the dashing cavalry leader swept entirely around McClellan's army in a ride that gave him fame the world over and placed him forever among the great cavalry captains of History.† Next, Jackson was instructed to strike a blow in the Valley which should startle Washington, and, while they were still dazed, to hasten and join Lee on the Chickahominy, and with his veterans act as Lee's left wing in a blow on McClellan's right, which should drive him from before Richmond. To make sure of this as well as to lull McClellan to a sense of security, several brigades were sent somewhat ostentatiously to Jackson; but time appeared so important that Jackson was summoned to join him without waiting for a stroke in the Valley, and putting his troops in motion the General rode ahead to Richmond to learn the details of Lee's plans and then rode back to hurry forward his troops, already pushing on by forced marches toward the field where, by Lee's brilliant plan, the as-

* Walter H. Taylor's "General Lee," p. 58.

† Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson."

sault was to be delivered at dawn on the 26th by his combined forces.*

With Jackson up, Lee's army numbered about 80,000 men.† His plan briefly was for Jackson, with his veterans, to advance at crack of day on June 26th, with Stuart on his left, and turn the long right wing of McClellan's army, under Porter, posted at Mechanicsville, in a strong position, commanding the turnpike across the Chickahominy, with Beaver Dam Creek and its upland behind it; for Branch's Brigade, facing Porter, to keep in touch with Jackson and on his advance to cross the Chickahominy and rejoin his commander A. P. Hill; for A. P. Hill, as soon as he knew Jackson was engaged, to cross the Chickahominy at the Meadow Bridge and force the crossing of the Chickahominy at the Mechanicsville Bridge; for Longstreet to cross to the support of A. P. Hill and for D. H. Hill to cross to the support of Jackson; meanwhile Magruder and Huger were to hold the defences on the south side of the Chickahominy and keep McClellan's main army well occupied.

Lee's plan was the consummation of audacity, for it would leave only 25,000 men to confront and hold McClellan's left wing and centre

* Walter H. Taylor's "General Lee," p. 60.

† Ibid., p. 62.

on the south bank of the Chickahominy, while he assaulted his right wing on the north bank with his main army. The time fixed for the assault was based on Jackson's conviction that he could be up and ready to attack at daylight on the 26th of June. But for once in his life Jackson was not "up." He was to have been at the Slash Church near Ashland on the 25th, and was to bivouac near the Central Railway (now the Chesapeake and Ohio), ready to march at three o'clock on the morning of the 26th on the road to Pole Green Church to deliver the assault which was to be the signal to A. P. Hill to cross the Chickahominy. But it was not until late that afternoon that he was able to reach the neighbourhood of the field of battle, where the fight had been raging for several hours, and even then he did not attack, but halted and lay with the roar of the guns to his right distinctly audible.

A. P. Hill having waited all day for news of Jackson, finally, fearful that the whole plan might miscarry, moved at three o'clock, crossed the Chickahominy at Meadow Bridge and carried the stoutly defended position of Mechanicsville, several miles below, and pushing forward, assaulted furiously, but in vain, the strongly defended position beyond

Beaver Dam Creek. That night, McClellan retired his left wing to his second line above Powhite Creek, Gaines's Mill and Cold Harbor. And here Lee attacked him again, and, after terrific fighting, defeated him in the furious battle of Gaines's Mill and Cold Harbor, seizing his position; capturing his line of communication to West Point, and driving him across the Chickahominy, forced him to abandon his threatening position on its south side and fall back across White Oak Swamp to Malvern Hill some miles to the rear. It was a brilliant stroke for Lee to have massed 50,000 men on the north bank of the Chickahominy and crushed McClellan's right wing, while he held the rest of his army with only 25,000 men, and had Jackson attacked on the morning of the 26th, as planned, or possibly even on the morning of the 27th, the victory might have been yet more decisive.* But it was necessary to do more to drive McClellan back from before Richmond.

On the 28th Lee held his army in hand, watchful to see which way McClellan, after his staggering blow, would move, whether by the way he had come, up the Peninsula, or toward the James, and as soon as it became apparent

*Taylor's "General Lee," pp. 68–78.

what he would do, ordered his troops to the south side of the Chickahominy and proceeded to attack again at Savage Station on the 29th, and at White Oak Swamp and Frazier's Farm on the 30th, carrying every position except one, which was held with heroic constancy until night-fall and then abandoned. The failure of some of his lieutenants to grasp the situation prevented the complete success of his plans, and McClellan got safely across White Oak Swamp. On July 1st Lee found McClellan entrenched in a formidable position on the uplands of Malvern Hill, and again flung himself upon him with immense loss to his own army, but with the result of forcing him to abandon his position and retreat precipitately by night to the shelter of his gunboats at Harrison's Landing.

Thus, Lee had, with less than 80,000 men, by his audacious tactics and masterly handling of his troops, defeated McClellan with more than 105,000 men, and driven him from position after position, relieving Richmond from what had appeared imminent danger of immediate capture.

Military critics have often wondered why Jackson, who both before and after the seven days' fighting around Richmond, proved him-

self the most eager, prompt and aggressive lieutenant that any commander had during the war, should apparently have been so slow in the execution of the plan entrusted to him in this critical movement. Old soldiers, who followed and adored him, still discuss the mysterious failure, and admit that "Old Jack" was "not himself" at this crisis.

An explanation has been given that he mistook the road leading toward the field of Cold Harbor, and missed his way.

The writer, as a resident of that region, familiar with the country and with the discussion of the facts, ventures to suggest a simple explanation. As is known, Jackson, after a brilliant but arduous campaign in the Shenandoah Valley, moved his troops from the Valley of Virginia along the line of the Virginia Central Railway, marching some and conveying some on the few railway trains he could procure, and when the latter were far enough ahead of those who were marching, he detrained them and set them to marching, sending the trains back to bring up the others and take them on ahead some distance, when they were in turn detrained and sent forward.

The distance from the Valley to the Chicka-

hominy being about 130 miles, the bringing forward of his troops, even with the indifferent assistance of his trains, occupied several days: and the General himself, with a staff officer or two, at a point some sixty odd miles west of Richmond, left the train and rode to Richmond to consult with Lee as to details, and, as I believe, to familiarize himself somewhat with the roads, which through Hanover are very confusing. It is of record that he then thought he could be up and ready to co-operate with Hill on the 25th, but General Longstreet claims that he urged that this was impossible and that if not the 27th, at the earliest the 26th should be set for the attack, which was agreed to. At Beaver Dam Station, on the Railway forty miles from Richmond, the last troops were taken from the train, and, together with those who had been marching the day before, took the road for Richmond by way of Honeyman's Bridge over the Little River, and then, owing to high water in the South Anna, instead of taking the shorter route by Ground-squirrel Bridge they marched by way of Ashland. From Little River to the field of Cold Harbor, the roads are deep with sand, water is scant, and in the blazing days of late June the progress of the troops was much slower than had

been reckoned on, and the move took nearly a day longer than had been counted on. Meanwhile, Jackson, who had left his train and ridden sixty odd miles to Richmond to confer with Lee, rode straight back to bring his men forward, met them at a point more than fifty miles from Richmond, and returned with them. Thus, when he reached the slashes of Hanover, he had been in the saddle almost continuously for several days and nights, and was completely broken down.*

Members of a troop of cavalry, known as the Hanover troop, (Company C, 4th Virginia Cavalry) who came from that region, were detailed to act as guides for the troops, and the man detailed to guide Jackson,† on reaching the neighborhood of the battlefield, found so many new roads cut by McClellan's troops, and so many familiar landmarks gone, that he became confused, and led the column some distance on the wrong road before discovering his error. It then became necessary to retrace their way; but marching the other troops back and turning around the artillery in the

* I remember as a boy seeing Jackson's columns passing down the road near my home in Hanover, some fifteen miles above Ashland, and every hour or so the men were made to lie down full length on the ground to rest.

† Lincoln Sydnor.

narrow road, bordered by forest and thickets, much time was lost. Ewell, who was present, threatened to hang the guide; but Jackson intervened, and bade him guide them back.*

However it was, Lee relieved Richmond, and the war, from being based on the issue of a single campaign, was now a matter of years and treasure.

The results of the battles around Richmond were summed up by Lee as follows:

In his General Order (No. 75, dated July 7, 1862), tendering his "warmest thanks and congratulations to the army by whose valor such splendid results were achieved," he says, "On Monday, June 26th, the powerful and thoroughly equipped army of the enemy was intrenched in works vast in extent and most formidable in character, within sight of our capital.

"To-day the remains of that confident and threatening host lie upon the banks of the

* The fact of Jackson's complete prostration is mentioned in a letter written at the time by his aide de camp, the gallant Lt. Col. Alexander S. Pendleton, killed later at Fisher's Hill. The other circumstances I had stated to me in a letter from A. R. Ellerson, Esquire, a member of the Hanover troop, whose home was near Mechanicsville, and who was with Sydnor at Jackson's headquarters and was sent with dispatches from General Lee. See Appendix B.

James River, thirty miles from Richmond, seeking to recover, under the protection of his gunboats, from the effects of a series of disastrous defeats.

"The immediate fruits of your success are the relief of Richmond from a state of siege, the routing of the great army that so long menaced its safety, many thousand prisoners including officers of high rank, the capture or destruction of stores to the value of millions, and the acquisition of thousands of arms and fifty-one pieces of superior artillery."

He concludes, after a tribute to the "gallant dead who died nobly in defence of their country's freedom," "Soldiers, your country will thank you for the heroic conduct you have displayed—conduct worthy of men engaged in a cause so just and sacred, and deserving a nation's gratitude and praise."

CHAPTER VIII

LEE RELIEVES RICHMOND

HAVING assumed the offensive and won signal success, Lee was not a general to lose the fruit of his victory, and be forced back into a defensive position the perils of which he well knew. McClellan was routed and driven back to the shelter of his gunboats; but he was still within little more than a day's march of Richmond with an army which, though demoralized, was, in its position, still formidable. And he could at any time cross to the South bank of the James and attack Richmond from that side, and threaten the cutting off of communication with the South by the chief line of communication, the Richmond and Danville Railway, a move he urgently recommended, but as to which he was overruled by Halleck and the authorities in Washington.* McDowell, too, a gallant soldier and gentleman, was still at Fredericksburg and hungry for a chance to atone for his disaster at Bull Run, and Pope, with another army greater

* Ropes, II, p. 238.

than Lee could send against him, was advancing across the Piedmont, dating his letters from "Headquarters in the saddle," and boasting that he never saw anything but the backs of his enemies.* If he should seize the Virginia Central Railroad he would destroy an important avenue with the southwest, and the one avenue of communication with the Valley of Virginia. If he should unite with McClellan the South would be lost. The situation was not a whit less critical than it had been on the 1st of June, when McClellan was advancing by approaches to shell Richmond.

But Lee was of all men the man to meet the situation. It might well be said of him as Condé and Turenne said of Merci, that he never lost a favorable moment, or failed to anticipate their most secret designs, as if he had assisted in their councils.

Let those who rank General Lee among the defensive captains say whether he acted on the defensive or offensive when, leaving only some twenty thousand men to guard Richmond, with McClellan still at Harrison's Landing, hurrying troops now to the South side of the James, now to Malvern Hill, he, with rare audacity,

*Pope gave his force as 43,000. Taylor's "General Lee," p. 86.

turned on Pope advancing across the Piedmont, and sent Jackson to strike him beyond the Rapidan, and then, after the first stroke at Cedar Mountain, sweeping around in a great half-circle through Thoroughfare Gap, struck him at Groveton a staggering blow, and facing him on the rolling plain of Manassas, routed and drove him back to the shelter of the forts around Alexandria, and with his army, ill-clad and ill-shod, so threatened the national capital that McClellan was hastily recalled from the James to its defence.

The manner of it was this:

After a rest of about ten days, spent in watching McClellan, who from time to time was moving troops up to Malvern Hill, or across the James, Lee addressed his attention to Pope, sending Jackson with his veterans, his old division of four brigades and Ewell's division of three brigades, to Gordonsville, and supporting him with A. P. Hill's division a little later, while with the remainder of his depleted army he covered Richmond. The effect of this bold movement was what he anticipated. On the 9th of August, Jackson attacked and defeated his old opponent, Banks's corps at Cedar Run, and then withdrew toward Gordonsville to avoid the attack by Pope's entire army until Lee should be ready to reinforce

him. On the 14th of August, McClellan received orders from Washington to withdraw his army from the Peninsula for the protection of the National Capital. On the 13th day of August, Lee having matured his plans and feeling secure as to Richmond, ordered Longstreet with Hood to Gordonsville, sending thither also Stuart and R. H. Anderson, and on the 19th issued his order for attack on the 20th. He had thus massed quickly some 54,000 men ready for his stroke, leaving only two brigades for the defence of Richmond. But President Davis wrote him, "Confidence in you overcomes the view which would otherwise be taken.* In the interval, however, Pope, who occupied the line of the Rapidan, having captured Stuart's Adjutant General † with a letter on his person from General Lee to General Stuart, setting forth his plans and making manifest to Pope his position and force and his determination to overwhelm the army under Pope before it could be reinforced by the Army of the Potomac, withdrew hastily behind the Rappahannock, which accident Stuart offset partially a few days later when, in a night attack at Catlett's station, he captured Pope's headquarters and effects, in-

* Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," II, p.254. Col. Wm. Allen, p. 199, n. 18 W. R., 928, 945.

† Major Fitzhugh. Pope's report.

cluding his dispatch-book, containing important information throwing light on the strength, movements and designs of the enemy and disclosing General Pope's own views against his ability to defend the line of the Rappahannock.*

This "fortunate accident" of the capture of Lee's letter containing his plans saved Pope for the time being, and he hastily withdrew behind the Rappahannock, thereby preventing the cutting off of his army from his base of supplies as Lee had planned. "This retreat," says Ropes in his history of the campaign, "was made not a day too soon. Pope's army had been, in truth, in an extremely dangerous position. . . . All this is very plain, but apparently it was not seen by General Pope until the capture of one of the officers of Stuart's staff put him in possession of Lee's orders to his army." † "Lee was greatly disappointed at Pope's escape," continues this able critic,‡ and he proceeds to show how, had Pope not retreated precipitately, he "would have been attacked in flank and rear and his communications severed into the bargain." "Doubtless," he adds, "he would have made a strenuous fight, but defeat under such circum-

* General Stuart's report, cited in Taylor's "General Lee."
† Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," pp. 256–257.
‡ Lee to Jackson, July 23, 1862, W. R., 916.

stances might well have been ruin. From this disaster Fortune saved Pope through the capture of Stuart's staff officer." *

Even thus, Lee determined to attack Pope beyond the Rappahannock, and Jackson was sent up the stream to cross beyond him at Sulphur Springs and turn his right. A great rain, however, raised the river suddenly after he had sent a brigade or two across, leaving them isolated and preventing their relief for several days. This rain, in Ropes's opinion saved Pope, who was now strictly on the defensive and was being encouraged by Halleck to "fight like the devil." †

It was after five days spent in trying to reach Pope's right beyond the swollen Rappahannock, that Lee put in operation his famous flank movement, by which, holding Pope's front with half his force, he despatched Jackson with a part of Stuart's cavalry to circle quite around Pope's right and crossing the Bull Run Mountains at Thoroughfare Gap, strike his line of communication in his rear. Considering that Pope had under him, on the Rappahannock, an army which, making allowance for all losses, "numbered upward of 70,000, when Lee under-

* Ropes's, II, pp. 257–258.

† Ropes's, II, pp. 259–260, 16. W. R., 56–57.

took this novel and perilous operation," one may well agree with Ropes that "the disparity between this force and that of Jackson is so enormous that it is impossible not to be amazed at the audacity of the Confederate General." *

Lee, however, was now assured of the withdrawal of McClellan's army as a consequence of his audacious strategy in threatening Washington, and having massed his forces in the Piedmont with a view to attacking Pope in his position along the Rappahannock, he proceeded to carry out his plans, however "novel and perilous," undisturbed by any forebodings. Sending Jackson up the now swollen stream to find a crossing-place well beyond Pope's right, and Longstreet after him to demonstrate in Pope's front and follow Jackson at the proper time, he awaited confidently the result of his audacious plan. Starting from Jefferson and crossing the river at a point four miles above Waterloo, on the morning of August 25th, Jackson marched twenty-five miles a day, bivouacked at Salem, and pushing forward with "his accustomed vigor and celerity," crossed the Bull Run Mountains at Thoroughfare Gap and about nightfall, on the 26th, while Pope thought he

* Ropes's, II, pp. 261–262. Allen, 212–213.

was headed for the Valley of the Shenandoah,* struck the railway at Bristow Station between Pope and the city he was supposed to be covering. At Gainesville, on the day after he started, he was joined by Stuart with two brigades of cavalry, flushed with the recent victory of Kelly's Ford. He despatched Stuart that night to capture Manassas Junction with its vast stores for Pope's army, which was successfully accomplished, and next morning, leaving Ewell to guard Bristow Station, he proceeded to Manassas, where he was joined later by Ewell, who had been forced back from Bristow Station after a sharp fight, and who brought the information that Pope had turned on him with his full force. That morning Pope had issued orders to abandon the line of the Rappahannock.† This was on the night of the 27th, and the morning of the 28th.

That same night Pope issued orders for his entire army to concentrate at or near Manassas Junction and a manifesto that he would "bag the whole crowd." Jackson, therefore, moved to the westward of the turnpike and took a position near Groveton, where he could await Longstreet's arrival by way of Thoroughfare

* 18, W. R., 653, 665.

† 16, W. R., 34, 70. Ropes's, II, p. 266.

Gap, or himself retire through the Gap should necessity arise.

On the afternoon of the 28th, Jackson, lying near Groveton, almost surrounded by Pope's army, learned that a large force was moving down the turnpike toward Centreville, where Pope had finally determined to concentrate. This was King's division of McDowell's command. He immediately sprang upon them, and the result was one of the most obstinately contested of the minor fields of the war.* That night the Federals withdrew and next day it was known that Pope "had taken a position to cover Washington against Jackson's advance." Jackson posted himself in a defensive position partially protected by the line of an unfinished railway extending northeastwardly from the Warrenton Turnpike, and awaited Longstreet, (with whom was Lee himself), who, having been relieved by R. H. Anderson, had crossed the river at Hinson's Mill, the same point where Jackson had crossed several days before, and was pushing forward for Thoroughfare Gap, which he reached on the afternoon of the 28th and, finding it in possession of the enemy, was forced to carry by assault. As Longstreet's com-

* Allen, 231, Henderson's "Stonewall Jackson," II, 179, 235. Ropes's, II, 272.

mand emerged from the gap next morning (29th) the sound of the guns toward Manassas told that the battle was on. Pushing forward by Gainesville, Longstreet moved to Jackson's right, where Sigel was striving to hold Jackson in check until Pope could concentrate his full force to destroy him. Other corps were soon put in and for hours the battle raged "with incessant fury and varying success, but Jackson stubbornly held his ground, though the fighting was often hand to hand and the bayonet was in constant requisition." * In all this fighting Longstreet took little part, though Lee himself three times expressed his wish that he should attack and thus relieve the hard-pressed Jackson. As General Lee did not positively order him in, he determined to wait and attack next day should a weak place be found in the enemy's lines, and he left Jackson and Hill to hold their position alone except for the aid afforded them by a reconnaissance in force by three gallant brigades—Hood's and Evans's with Wilcox in support. The command of Fitz John Porter numbering some 10,000 men, lay near Gainesville, deployed to engage any force in their front and Longstreet thought the enemy was marching on him from the rear and failed to press in to Jackson's aid.

*Taylor's "General Lee," p. 106.

Thus Porter fully performed his task.* Fortunately for Lee, he knew that Pope thought he was in a perilous position and was anxious only to escape, and he disposed his troops to take advantage of this erroneous view, which he did completely. Pope, who claimed to have won the battle of the evening before, was obsessed with the idea that Jackson was in full retreat and he massed his army to destroy or "bag" him, giving McDowell the "general charge of the pursuit." It was afternoon of the following day (the 30th) before Pope's gallant lines advanced to the attack along the Warrenton Pike, with Porter leading against Jackson's front in such force that Jackson called on Lee for reinforcements. Lee immediately ordered General Longstreet in. The fighting was from this time furious. Line after line came on under the leaden sleet with a courage which aroused the admiration of their antagonists and called for the utmost exertion to repel them. But mortal flesh could not stand against the deadly rain of shot and shell poured down on the brigades "piling up against Jackson's right, centre and left" † and they melted away in the fiery furnace. "Their repeated efforts to rally were," as

* Ropes's, II, 281.

† See Report: Taylor's "General Lee," pp. 112–113.

Lee reported, "unavailing, and Jackson's troops, being thus relieved from the pressure of overwhelming numbers, began to press steadily forward, driving the enemy before them." As they retreated in confusion, "Longstreet anticipating the order for a general advance, now threw his whole command against the Federal centre and left, and the whole line swept steadily on, driving the enemy with great carnage from each successive position."

Thus by Lee's "novel and perilous movement," carried out to complete success, was won the great battle of Second Manassas, which completed the campaign by which he relieved Richmond.

During the night Pope withdrew to the north side of Bull Run and occupied a strong position on the heights about Centreville. But by this time the hunter had become the hunted. Lee, driving for the fruits of his dearly won victory, ordered Jackson to push forward around Pope's right, while Longstreet engaged him in front, and Pope, now thoroughly demoralized, retired first on Fairfax Court House and after a sharp engagement with Jackson at Chantilly, to the secure shelter of the formidable forts at Alexandria. Thus, Lee, with 50,000 men had routed and drawn Pope from his menacing position

with 62,000, or as Ropes states 70,000 men, as gallant as any soldiers in the world, captured more than 9,000 prisoners; thirty pieces of artillery, upward of 20,000 stand of small arms, numerous colors, and a large amount of stores.*

It was a proof of Pope's utter demoralization that he telegraphed that unless something were "done to restore the tone of his army, it would melt away," and that he attacked, as the cause of his disaster, the gallant Fitz John Porter, with a vehemence which might better have been employed on the field of Manassas, and placed on this fine soldier and honorable gentleman a stigma which it took a generation to extirpate.

Such was the fruit of Lee's bold generalship, and he was now to give a yet further proof of his audacity and skill.

* Lee's report cited in Taylor's "General Lee," p. 117. The Federal losses were 1,738 killed, and 10,135 wounded. Confederate losses, 1,090 killed, and 6,154 wounded. Pope had over 70,000 men. See Ropes's, cited *ante*.

CHAPTER IX

LEE'S AUDACITY—ANTIETAM AND CHANCELLORSVILLE

LEE'S move against Pope was not merely the boldest, and possibly the most masterly piece of strategy in the whole war; it was, as has been well said, "one of the most brilliant and daring movements in the history of wars." But he did not pause to enjoy his victory. His army was well-nigh shoeless, and the South was unable to help him. Need became the handmaid of strategy. He was nearer to Washington than to Richmond. Maryland lay the other side of Pope's army. He would place that army and the other armies also between him and Richmond. He determined to march around Pope's army and invade Maryland to subsist his army and relieve Virginia, and to give Maryland the power to join the Southern Confederacy, which it was believed she longed to do. Again circling around to the westward, he dispatched Jackson to capture Harper's Ferry and pushed on into Maryland. It had been hoped that Maryland

would rise and declare for the South. Maryland did not respond. This, however, was not the cause of his failure. That he did not reap the full fruits of this wonderful generalship was due to one of those strange events, which, so insignificant in itself, yet under Him who,

> "Views with equal eye as God of All,
> A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,"

is fateful to decide the issues of nations. As the capture of his letter and plans had given Pope warning and led him to retire his army behind the Rappahannock, so now an even stranger fate befell him. A copy of his dispatch giving his entire plan, was picked up on the site of a camp formerly occupied by D. H. Hill, wrapped about a handful of cigars, and promptly reached McClellan, thus betraying to him a plan which but for this strange accident, might have resulted in the complete overthrow of his army, and even in the capture of the National capital, and enabling him with his vast resources, to frustrate it. A man's carelessness usually reacts mainly upon himself, but few incidents in the history of the world have ever been fraught with such fateful consequences as that act of the unknown staff-officer or courier, who chose Lee's plan of battle as a wrapping for his tobacco.

"If we always had exact information of our enemy's dispositions," said Frederick, "we should beat him every time." This exact information this strange mishap gave Lee's adversary on the eve of Antietam. Even so, Lee, who fought the battle with only 35,000 men, came off with more glory than his antagonist, who had 87,000,* as gallant men, moreover, as ever braved death, and the latter was a little later removed by his Government as a failure, while Lee stood higher than ever in the affection and esteem of the South.

Lee's order was discovered and delivered to McClellan on the 13th, and McClellan at once set himself to the task of meeting the situation by relieving Harper's Ferry on the one hand and crushing Lee's army in detail among the passes of the Maryland Spurs. Lee, however, had, through the good offices of a friendly citizen who had been present at or had learned of the delivery of his dispatch to McClellan, soon become aware of the misfortune that had befallen him, and while McClellan was preparing to destroy him, he was taking prompt measures to repair the damage as fully as possible. He

* General Lee told Fitz Lee that he fought the battle of Sharpsburg with 35,000 troops. And McClellan reported that he himself had 87,164 troops.—(Fitzhugh Lee's "Life of Lee," p. 209.) *Cf.* also Ropes's, "Story of the Civil War," II, pp. 376–377.

instantly recalled Longstreet from Hagerstown, ordered Hill back to Turner's Gap and Stuart to Crampton Gap, to defend it against McClellan's expected advance, a disposition which delayed the enemy until the evening of the 14th, when, after fierce fighting, they carried both positions, forcing McLaws back from Crampton Gap to Pleasant Valley, across which, however, he established "a formidable line of defence." Lee was thus forced either to retreat across the Potomac, or to fight where he had not contemplated fighting. He seems to have wavered momentarily which course to adopt, and well he might waver. It was a perilous situation. He had with him, when the gaps were stormed on the afternoon of the 14th, only about 19,000 men in all,* "while the main army of McClellan was close upon him." He issued an order that night (8 P. M.) to McLaws to cross the Potomac below Shepherdstown, leaving the ford at Shepherdstown for the main army to take. "But in less than two hours Lee had changed his mind,—why we are not informed—" says Ropes, "and had determined to await battle north of the Potomac." By midnight he had planned his battle; he had ordered the cavalry to pilot McLaws over the mountains and across

* Ropes's "Story of the Civil War," II, p. 347.

country to Sharpsburg, where he had determined to make his stand on the east of Antietam creek. He had also taken measures to bring up his other troops as rapidly as possible. "This decision," says Ropes, "to stand and fight at Sharpsburg, which General Lee took on the evening of the 14th of September—just after his troops had been driven from the South Mountain passes—is beyond controversy one of the boldest and most hazardous decisions in his whole military career. It is, in truth, so bold and hazardous that one is bewildered that he could even have thought seriously of making it." *

Lee's decision was, indeed, so bold and hazardous that the thoughtful Ropes suggests that he must have been influenced by fear of loss of his military prestige. "General Lee, however," he admits, "thought there was a fair chance for him to win a victory over McClellan," † and he adds that "naturally he did not consider them (McClellan's troops) as good as his own, and it is without doubt that they did not constitute so good an army as that which he commanded."

We know, however, that while Longstreet

* Ropes's, "Story of the Civil War," II, p. 349.

† Ropes's, "Story of the Civil War," p. 351–352.

(as usual) suggested the obstacles and dangers of the situation, Jackson approved the action of Lee both before and after the battle.*

On the night of the 14th, General Lee withdrew his army across Antietam creek and assumed a position which he thought stronger, along a range of hills on the east side of the Hagerstown turnpike with his right resting on Antietam creek and his left refused across the turnpike some three miles to the northward, this pike being a line of communication between the two wings by which he could support either when hard pressed. Thus, he waited for Jackson, who, on the same day, captured Harper's Ferry with its garrison, munitions and stores, and leaving A. P. Hill in charge, set out in haste to reinforce Lee, who was confronting McClellan's great army of 75,000 men with only 19,000 men and about 125 guns.†

McClellan's army with whom Lee's cavalry had been effectively skirmishing, appeared in his front in the early afternoon, and Ropes declares, that it was an "unique opportunity" that was offered the Union general. McClellan, however, still believed that Lee had at least

* Lee's Letter to Mrs. Jackson, January 15, 1866.

† Ropes's, II, pp. 354–355.

100,000 men under his command, and he knew how ably that army, whatever its numbers, was commanded. Moreover, he believed that his own army was still not fully recovered from the demoralization it had suffered from under Pope. He was, therefore, inclined to be cautious. Accordingly, it was not until next day that he made any demonstrations against Lee. Meantime, on the morning of the 16th, Jackson arrived with all of his army who could march, between 8,000 and 9,000 men in all, the remainder of them, barefooted and lame, being left behind. But these, alike with those who could march, were flushed with victory. Lee's troops were disposed with Longstreet commanding his right and Jackson his left, with Hood in support, while McClellan, in disposing his forces had placed Hooker on his extreme right with the first corps, Sumner next on his right, with two corps, the 2d and 12th, then Porter with the 5th corps, occupying his centre and Burnside on the left with the 9th corps, good troops and bravely led. That afternoon, in pursuance of McClellan's plan, Hooker was ordered to cross the Antietam and assault Lee's left, and crossing the stream his corps assaulted the portion of the line led by Hood, but was "gallantly repulsed." The only effect of this

assault is declared by Ropes to have been the disclosure of McClellan's plans.*

The real battle of Sharpsburg, however, was fought on the 17th, and was the bloodiest battle of the war, a battle in which intrepid courage marked both sides, shining alike in the furious charges of the men who assaulted Lee's lines and the undaunted constancy of the men who defended them. It began early in the morning with an attack by Hooker's corps, the first shock falling on Ewell's division in Jackson's wing, and within the bloody hour of the first onslaught, General J. R. Jones, commanding Jackson's old division, was borne from the field to be followed immediately by Starke, who succeeded him in command, mortally wounded. "Colonel Douglass, commanding Lawton's brigade, was killed. General Lawton, commanding division and Colonel Walker, commanding brigade, were severely wounded. More than half of the brigades of Lawton and Hays were either killed or wounded, and more than a third of Trimble's, and all of the regimental commanders in those brigades, except two, were killed or wounded.† In this extremity, Hood's brigades and three of D. H. Hill's brigades were rushed

* Ropes's, II, pp. 358–359.

† Ropes's, II, p. 359, citing Jackson's Report, 27 W. R., 956.

to the front in support of the exhausted divisions of Jones and Lawton, and after an hour of furious fighting, Hooker's force, led by himself with Doubleday, Ricketts and Meade, gallant commanders of gallant divisions, were beaten off, with Hooker himself wounded and over 2,500 men dead or wounded. It was a terrific opening of a terrific day. As they retired, Mansfield's corps came in on their left, and in the furious onslaught on the already shattered brigades of D. H. Hill and Hood, bore them back across the turnpike, "with a loss of some 1,700 men out of the 7,000 brought into action, and an even heavier loss on the Confederate side. But beyond the turnpike the remnants of Jones's division under Grigsby, reinforced by Early, who had succeeded the wounded Lawton in command of Ewell's division, "clung obstinately" to their ground.* A brief lull took place, broken by the advance of Sumner, with two divisions pushing hotly across the turnpike, his veteran troops cheering and being cheered, confident of sweeping everything before them. Beyond the turnpike, however, they came on the remnants of Jackson's divisions, lying behind a rocky ledge, who gave them a staggering reception, and at this moment the divisions of

* Ropes's, II, pp. 361–362.

McLaws and Walker, who, sent by Lee from his right, had just come up and deployed across Sumner's and Sedgwick's flank, poured forth on them a fire so "terrible and sustained" that, after a futile effort to change front, the federals broke and fell back in confusion under the shelter of their artillery, with a loss of over 2,200, officers and men, all within a few minutes. This act of Lee in reinforcing his left wing from his right at this critical juncture, Ropes praises as exhibiting remarkable "skill and resolution." An effort made to press Sedgwick's defeated troops, who reformed behind their artillery, was repulsed by the artillery, but not until 39½ per cent. of McLaw's division had fallen. A little later the remnants of Jones's and Lawton's troops drove the enemy from the ground they had secured in the second assault; but by this time all the Confederate troops in that part of the field had sustained terrific losses. "They had, indeed," says Ropes, "with the utmost bravery, with inflexible resolution and at a terrible sacrifice of life, repelled the third attack on the left flank of the Confederate army."* Meantime, Sumner's other division, under French, which was put in to reinforce Sedgwick, had by bearing southward, been engaged

* Ropes's, II, p. 367.

in a bloody and desperate conflict on Lee's left centre, with the divisions of D. H. Hill and R. H. Anderson, the latter of whom, on his way to reinforce the left wing, finding Hill's already decimated brigades hard pressed, had turned aside to their succor. They were soon in a desperate struggle with over 10,000 fresh troops, under French and Richardson. The combat which followed, "was," says Ropes, "beyond a question one of the most sanguinary and desperate in the whole war." * For an hour or more the conflict raged over the famous sunken road before the Federals secured possession of it, and "Bloody Lane" is the name to-day by which is known this deadly roadway whose possession that day cost over 6,000 men. "At this moment," says the same high authority whose account we are following, "fortune favored McClellan. The two divisions of Franklin's corps under W. F. Smith and Slocum, had arrived on this part of the field." They numbered from 10,000 to 12,000 men, fresh and in good condition.

Franklin wished to put them in, but Sumner, who had tested the temper of the men who held Lee's line, was unwilling to risk another attack and "McClellan, undoubtedly much influenced

* Ropes's, II, p. 368.

by Sumner, would not permit any attack." The battle was now raging along the front of Lee's right, protected by the Antietam. About 1 P. M. the bridge was carried, and the stream was crossed both above and below, but not until four assaults had been repelled by Tombs's brigade of D. R. Jones's division, assisted by the well posted artillery. About three o'clock Cox made his assault on the heights where lay Lee's right, and achieved "a brilliant success," breaking the infantry line and capturing McIntosh's battery; and says Ropes, "A complete victory seemed within sight. But this was not to be." Just at the crucial moment the Confederate "light division"—five brigades under A. P. Hill, pushing from Harper's Ferry, for the sound of the guns "climbed the heights south of the town," and "without an instant's hesitation they rushed to the rescue of their comrades," and the end was not long in coming. The lines were recaptured along with McIntosh's battery, and the Federal troops, with victory apparently almost in their grasp were driven back with terrific slaughter. "The failure to put Franklin in," was, in the opinion of Ropes, a capital error. He insists that McClellan should have won the battle; for unlike those who argue only from subsequent events, this thoughtful

student of war admits that while "Lee's invasion had terminated in failure," he and his army had unquestionably won glory, even though he claims that the prestige of victory rested later with McClellan.* Thus ended what is said to have been the bloodiest day of the war, and one of the bloodiest battles ever fought. Each side lost about one-quarter of the troops engaged, and Lee had, with less than half the force his enemy had, though compelled to fight in a place where he had not intended to fight, beaten his brave enemy off with such slaughter that though he offered him battle next day, he was not again attacked, and the following morning he retired across the Potomac unmolested. Of "his intrepidity" in standing to fight an army of 70,000 with less than 40,000 men, not all of whom in fact were with him at the commencement of the action, Ropes has nothing but praise. "Nor could any troops," he adds, "have more fully justified the reliance their leader placed in them than the troops of the army of Northern Virginia." † "Lee, in fact, intended to try his men again." Both Longstreet and Jackson urged recrossing the Potomac that night; but he refused. "Gentlemen," he said, when his gen-

* Ropes's, "Story of the Civil War," II, p. 379.

† Ropes's, II, p. 377.

erals had advised retreat, "I shall remain where I am. If McClellan offers me a chance, I shall fight him again." All the next day he watched for this chance as the eagle watches from his crag for the prey; but it did not come and he recrossed into Virginia.

Of the battle of Antietam the view usually expressed is one largely influenced by events which succeeded it after a long interval. The view at the time, based on the actual battle and its immediate consequences was widely different. Horace Greeley's paper representing the great constituency which at that time opposed Lincoln's methods, voiced their opinion. "He leaves us," he declared, "the débris of his late camp, two disabled pieces of artillery, a few hundred of his stragglers; perhaps two thousand of his wounded and as many more of his unburied dead. Not a sound field-piece, caisson, ambulance or wagon; not a tent, box of stores or a pound of ammunition. He takes with him the supplies gathered in Maryland and the rich spoils of Harper's Ferry." *

What those rich spoils were Lee himself mentions in the general order issued to his army two weeks after it had "on the field of Sharpsburg with less than one-third of his [the enemy's]

* New York *Tribune*. Quoted from Jones's "Lee," p. 195.

numbers . . . resisted from daylight until dark the whole army of the enemy and repulsed every attack along his entire front of more than four miles in extent."

In this order the Commanding General recounts to his army its achievements, in reviewing which he declares he "cannot withhold the expression of his admiration of the indomitable courage it has displayed in battle, and its cheerful endurance of privation and hardship on the march." *

"Since your great victories around Richmond," he declares, "you have defeated the enemy at Cedar Mountain, expelled him from the Rappahannock, and after a conflict of three days, utterly repulsed him on the plain of Manassas, and forced him to take shelter within the fortifications around his capital. Without halting for repose, you crossed the Potomac, stormed the heights of Harper's Ferry, made prisoners of more than 11,600 men and captured upward of seventy pieces of artillery, all of their small arms and other munitions of war. While one corps of the army was thus engaged, another ensured its success by arresting at Boonsboro the combined armies of the enemy, advancing under their favorite general to the relief of their beleaguered comrades.

* General Orders, No. 116.

"On the field of Sharpsburg, with less than one-third of his numbers, you resisted from daylight till dark the whole army of the enemy, and repulsed every attack along his entire front of more than four miles in extent.

"The whole of the following day you stood prepared to resume the conflict on the same ground, and retired next morning without molestation across the Potomac.

"Two attempts subsequently made by the enemy to follow you across the river have resulted in his complete discomfiture and his being driven back with loss."

Such was the view that the Commanding General, Lee, himself, took of his campaign two weeks after the battle of Antietam, and it is no wonder that he should have added, "Achievements such as these demanded much valor and patriotism. History records few examples of greater fortitude and endurance than this army has exhibited," or that he should, as he reports, have "been commissioned by the President to thank the army, in the name of the Confederate States for the undying fame they had won for their arms."

In truth, whatever long subsequent events may have developed as to the consequences of the attack at Sharpsburg and Lee's retirement

across the Potomac afterward, to the student of war, now, as then, it must appear that the honors of that bloodiest battle of the war were with Lee and remain with him to-day. That McClellan with the complete disposition of Lee's forces in his hand, with an army of 87,000 men, as brave as ever died for glory and as gallantly officered, should not have destroyed Lee with but 35,000 on the field, and that Lee, with but that number up, while the rest shoeless and lame, were limping far behind, yet trying to get up, should with his back to the river, have not only survived that furious day, repulsing every attack along that bloody four miles front, but should have stood his ground to offer battle again next day and then have retired across the river unmolested, is proof beyond all doubt.*

"Why do you not move that line of battle to make it conform to your own?" asked Hunter McGuire of Grigsby, gazing at a long line of men lying quietly in ranks in a field at some little distance.

"Those men are all dead," was the reply, "they are Georgia soldiers." †

* The Union losses were 12,400; Confederate, 8,000.

† Address on Stonewall Jackson, by Dr. Hunter McGuire, "The Confederate Cause," p. 204.

That night 20,000 men, dead or wounded, lay on the field of Sharpsburg.

I have thought well to discuss somewhat at length this great battle fought by Lee on Northern soil, because it seems to illustrate peculiarly those qualities which, in combination, made him the great captain he was, and absolutely refutes the foolish if not malevolent charge that he was only a defensive general, and remarkable only when behind breastworks. It exhibits absolutely his grasp of the most difficult and unexpected situation; his unequalled audacity; his intrepidity; his resourcefulness; his incomparable resolution and his skill in handling men alike in detached sections and on the field of battle. Possibly no other general on either side would have had the boldness to risk the stand Lee made in the angle of the Antietam, with the Potomac at his back; certainly no other general save Grant would have stood his ground after the battle, and have saved the morale of his army, and as to Grant it is merely conjecture; for he fought no battle south of the Rapidan in which he did not largely outnumber his antagonist, and vastly excel him in equipment.

It is true, as Ropes states, that McClellan followed Lee across the Potomac, but his two immediate attempts were promptly repelled

and his troops driven back, and it was not until more than a month later, when Lee lay about Winchester, that McClellan made good a footing in Virginia. During this time Stuart had again crossed over into Maryland, and made a complete circuit of McClellan's army.

In the early days of November McClellan advanced on Warrenton, and Lee, in anticipation, moved down to the east of the Blue Ridge and occupied Culpeper and the region south of the Rappahannock, and after a tart correspondence between McClellan and the authorities in Washington over McClellan's failure to destroy Lee's army, McClellan was relieved of his command, and Burnside appointed in his place, the order issuing on the 6th of November. Thus, the North lost the services of the general whom General Lee considered the best commander opposed to him during the war. That he was not Lee's equal either as a strategist, a tactician or a fighter, was clearly manifest then as it is now; but he was a great organizer; conducted war on high principles; restored the morale of a shattered army and defeated the object of Lee's first invasion of Maryland. And as has been already quoted, it was well said that "without McClellan there could have been no Grant."

"Though badly found in weapons, ammunition, military equipment, etc.," says Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley, in speaking of Lee at this time, "his army had, nevertheless, achieved great things. His men were so badly shod (indeed, a considerable portion had no boots or shoes) that at the battle of Antietam General Lee assured me he never had more than 35,000 men with him; the remainder of his army, shoeless and footsore, were straggling along the roads in the rear trying to reach him in time for the battle."

Had Lee been in McClellan's place who can doubt what the issue would have been! In fact, Mr. Lincoln plainly put this question to McClellan in another connection, and a little later relieved him of command and put the brave but hesitating Burnside in his place only to add on the fatal field of Fredericksburg new laurels to Lee's chaplet.

Burnside, having made it manifest that he designed to cross the Rappahannock at Fredericksburg, Lee promptly moved down from Culpeper and Orange on the upper waters of the Rappahannock, and posting himself on the heights on the southern side of the town, fortified and awaited Burnside's advance. The fortifications for the artillery were made under

the superintendence of General Lee's chief of artillery, General Wm. N. Pendleton, and were much commended. At least they served. It was now nearly mid-December. Burnside's forces as given by himself numbered 113,000; while Lee's total strength was 78,288 men of all arms.*

The actual laying of the pontoons was gallantly effected by the federal troops on the afternoon of the 11th, under cover of a heavy artillery fire from 150 guns, and that evening and the following day Burnside's army crossed over, their movements being veiled by a heavy fog which rose from the river and the sodden ground, blanketing all beneath it. The following morning, as the fog lifted, Burnside's army, with Franklin commanding his left and Sumner his right, advanced to the attack where Lee lay along the heights above the town, with Longstreet commanding his left and Jackson his right. It was a battle as fierce almost as Sharpsburg, and scarcely less deadly for the hapless assailants. The assault began on the less commanding hills to the south of the town where Jackson lay, his right protected by the artillery and Stuart's cavalry, faced North on the plain near Hamilton's crossing. Line after line advanced to the attack, only to

* Taylor's "General Lee," pp. 145–146.

be swept back with terrific slaughter, and at one point where a marshy stream, known as Deep Run, came through, bordered by woodland, the gallant assailants broke through the advanced line of A. P. Hill; but they were quickly forced back and the line re-established. Franklin's brave divisions having failed to break Lee's right, an assault was made against Lee's left by Sumner who had been ordered to hold his men where they were sheltered by the town, until "an impression" could be made on Lee's right. It was an even more impossible and deadly task than Franklin had essayed. "Six distinct and separate assaults were made against Longstreet's front"; line after line rushing recklessly forward under the iron sleet, "only to be torn to pieces," and melt away, without making any impression on Lee's determined veterans. When night came, the great army of Burnside had been hurled back with losses amounting to 12,500 men, "sacrificed to incompetency," after having displayed, in a task which "exceeded human endeavor," a heroism which "won the praise and the pity of their opponents." *

The following day passed without the renewal

* Taylor's "General Lee," p. 148. The losses in the Federal Army numbered 12,653; in the Confederate Army, 5,322, killed and wounded.

of the attack which Lee expected, and that night Burnside, shaken and distressed over his disaster, withdrew his decimated divisions across the Rappahannock and next morning sent a flag of truce to Jackson's front, asking for a cessation of hostilities to bury the dead.*

Fredericksburg was, with the exception of Cold Harbor, almost the only wholly defensive battle that Lee fought, and in this he could scarcely believe that Burnside had put forth all his strength. His report and letters show that he expected and awaited another and fiercer assault. It is asserted that Jackson counselled a night attack on Burnside's army as it lay in the town after the battle, and he undoubtedly contemplated the possibility of such an attack, for he ordered his chief of medical staff to be

* The writer as a small boy rode over the battlefield of Fredericksburg with his father, who was a Major on the staff of General Wm. N. Pendleton, General Lee's chief of artillery, and he recalls vividly the terrible sight of a battlefield while the dead are being buried: blood everywhere—along the trenches, the shattered fences and the roadsides—the orchards, peeled by the bullets and canister, looked at a little distance as if covered with snow; the plank fences splintered by shot and shrapnel, looked as though they had been whitewashed, and the field, torn by shells and covered with dead horses, broken arms and débris, presented an ineffaceable scene of desolation, while on the common, being filled with the bloody and rigid forms of those who two days before had been the bravest of the brave, was a long, wide, ghastly trench, where the path of glory ended.

ready with his bandages to furnish bands for the arms of the men, by which they would know each other, should such an attack be made.* Lee, however, decided against this plan, if it was ever formally proposed, and in his report he gives his reason. "The attack on the 13th," he says, "had been so easily repulsed and by so small a part of our army that it was not supposed the enemy would limit his effort, which in view of the magnitude of his preparations and the extent of his force, seemed to be comparatively insignificant. Believing, therefore, that he would attack us, it was not deemed expedient to lose the advantage of our position and expose the troops to the fire of his inaccessible batteries, beyond the river by advancing against him."

Lee was at this time at the zenith of his fame as a successful general, yet was never more modest. His letter of Christmas Day, 1862, to his wife is full of the spirit of the man in his most intimate moments. He writes: "I will commence this holy day by writing to you. My heart is filled with gratitude to God for the unspeakable mercies with which He has blessed us in this day; for those He has granted us from

* Address on Stonewall Jackson, by Dr. Hunter McGuire, "The Confederate Cause." The Bell Co., Richmond, Virginia.

the beginning of Life, and particularly for those he has vouchsafed us during the past year. What should have become of us without His crowning help and protection? Oh! if our people would only recognize it and cease from vain self-boasting and adulation, how strong would be my belief in final success and happiness to our country. But what a cruel thing is war to separate and destroy families and friends, and mar the purest joys and happiness God has granted us in this world, to fill our hearts with hatred instead of love for our neighbors and to devastate the fair face of this beautiful world! I pray that on this day when only peace and good will are preached to mankind, better thoughts may fill the hearts of our enemies and turn them to peace. Our army was never in such good health and condition since I have been attached to it. I believe they share with me my disappointment that the enemy did not renew the combat on the 13th. I was holding back all that day and husbanding our strength and ammunition for the great struggle for which I thought I was preparing. Had I divined that was to have been his only effort, he would have had more of it. My heart bleeds at the death of every one of our gallant men."

Should the portrait of a victorious general be

drawn, I know no better example than this simple outline of a Christian soldier drawn out of his heart that Christmas morning in his tent, while the world rang with his victory of two weeks before. It is a portrait of which the South may well be proud.

But again we have, following on his success in the defence of Fredericksburg, the proof of Lee's boldness in offensive operations, which resulted in what is esteemed among foreign military critics as the most brilliant action, not only of the Civil War, but of the century.

With a vast expenditure of care and treasure, the armies of the Union were once more recruited and equipped, and the command of the Army of the Potomac was entrusted to General Hooker, "Fighting Joe Hooker," as he was called—whose reputation was such that he was supposed to make good at once all the deficiencies of McClellan and Burnside. He had shown capacity to command a corps both in the West and the East, and was given to criticising his superiors with much self-confidence. His self-confidence was, indeed, so great that it called from Mr. Lincoln one of those remarkable letters which he was given to writing on occasion. The plan on which he proceeded was acknowledged to be well-conceived and gave promise of victory.

While Burnside was ordered to cross the Rappahannock below Lee's fortified position at Fredericksburg, threaten his right flank, and assail his lines of communication with Richmond, Hooker marched up the river, crossed it high up beyond Lee's extreme left and prepared to assail his rear. In the full assurance that he had "the finest army in the world holding the strongest position on the planet," he elaborated his plans and prepared to deliver the assault which should force Lee from his defensive position with the alternative of the capture of his entire army. Possibly, he ranked Lee as a captain good for defensive operations alone. If so, his error cost him dear. While he was congratulating himself on his tactics and issuing grandiloquent proclamations to his eager yet untried army in the tone of a conqueror, declaring that the enemy must come out from his breastworks and fight him on his own ground "where certain destruction awaited him," or else "ingloriously fly," Lee performed the same masterly feat which he had already performed before Richmond and in the Piedmont, and with yet more signal success. Detaching Stonewall Jackson from his force in front of Burnside, he sent him around Hooker's right at Chancellorsville, and while the latter was congratulating himself that Lee was in

full retreat on Gordonsville, he fell upon him and rolled him up like a scroll. Unhappily, his great lieutenant who performed this feat, fell in the moment of victory, shot by his own men in the dusk of the evening as he galloped past from a reconnaissance. Possibly, Hooker's army was saved by this fatal accident from capture or annihilation that night. For when, a week later, Stonewall Jackson, still murmuring of his battle lines, passed over the river to rest under the shade of the trees, it was with a fame hardly second to that of his great captain.

The question has often been debated whether the chief credit for the victory at Chancellorsville should be assigned to Lee or to Jackson. Lee, himself, has settled it in a letter which he wrote to Mrs. Jackson, in which he states that the responsibility for the flank attack by Jackson, that is, for the tactics which made it possible, necessarily rested on him. He repeated the statement in a letter to his friend, Professor Bledsoe. And apart from his conclusive statement, this is the judgment of Jackson's biographer, General Henderson. Commenting on the question as to whether to Lee or Jackson the credit was due for the daring plan of the campaign against Pope, Henderson says, "We have record of few enterprises of greater daring

than that which was then decided on; and no matter from whose brain it emanated, on Lee fell the burden of the responsibility; on his shoulders and on his alone, rested the honor of the Confederate arms, the fate of Richmond, the independence of the South; and if we may suppose, so consonant was the design proposed with the strategy which Jackson had already practised, that it was to him its inception was due, it is still to Lee that we must assign the higher merit. It is easy to conceive. It is less easy to execute. But to risk cause and country, name and reputation, on a single throw, and to abide the issue with unflinching heart, is the supreme exhibition of the soldier's fortitude." *

It is, indeed, no disparagement from Jackson's fame to declare that, if possible, even more brilliant than the afternoon attack on Hooker's right which routed that wing and began the demoralization of his army, was the final attack, when Lee, who had left Early with only enough men at Fredericksburg to hold Burnside in check, learning that Sedgwick had forced a crossing and was marching on his rear, turned and, leaving only a fragment of his army to hold the shaken Hooker in his breastworks, fell on Sedgwick and hurled him back across the river,

* Henderson's "Life of Stonewall Jackson," II., p. 582.

and then, turning again, fell on Hooker's position, and so crushed him that he was glad to retreat by night, broken and discouraged, across the Rappahannock.

The victory of Chancellorsville, in which Lee with 62,000 men and 170 guns completely routed Hooker on his own ground with 120,000 men and 448 guns, was, declares Henderson, "the most brilliant feat of arms of the century." Thus, Lee had destroyed the reputation of more generals than any captain had destroyed since Napoleon.

But the attrition was grinding away the forces of the blockaded and beleaguered Confederacy. It was a case of "One more such victory and we are lost." It became necessary to remove the seat of war into a new region. For this reason Lee, boldly flanking Hooker, who, secure on the further side of the Rappahannock, was boasting still, marched his army into Maryland and Pennsylvania, not for conquest, but for subsistence, and to employ once more, at need, the strategy which he knew would compel the withdrawal of the forces still threatening Richmond.

With masterly foresight he had once written that a pitched battle would probably be fought at York, or at Gettysburg.

It was thus that the wheat-clad ridges about

the little Pennsylvania town of Gettysburg, with the valley between them, became the field of the battle which possibly turned the fluctuating tide of the war. Lee's meeting with Meade's army at this spot was to some extent a surprise to him; for his able and gallant cavalry commander, Stuart, on whom he had relied to keep him informed touching the enemy, had been led by the ardor of a successful raid further afield than had been planned, and the presence of Meade's army in force was unsuspected until too late to decline battle.* Heth's division had sought the place for imperatively needed supplies and found the Union troops holding it, and a battle was precipitated. Lee's plan of battle failed here, but the student of war knows how it failed and why. It failed because his lieutenants failed, and his orders were not carried out —possibly because he called on his intrepid army for more than human strength was able to achieve. "Had I had Jackson at Gettysburg," he once said, "I should, so far as man can judge, have won that battle."

* That Stuart was in any way responsible for this is denied by Colonel John S. Mosby, in his "Stuart in the Gettysburg Campaign."

CHAPTER X

LEE'S CLEMENCY

POSSIBLY, Lee's one fault as a soldier was that he was not always rigorous enough with his subordinates; that, if such a thing be possible, he was too magnanimous. He took blame on himself where it should rightly have been adjudged to others. Yet, this weakness as a soldier but added to his nobility as a man, and it is as a man—a type of the man bred of Southern blood and under the Southern civilization that we are now considering him.

While many competent critics in his army were charging Longstreet with having been the cause of the disaster at Gettysburg, Lee wrote him a letter such as only a man of noble nature could have written to an old comrade who had failed him. He showed him a magnanimity which was ill requited when Longstreet wrote his own story of the war.

As the years pass by, the military genius of Lee must be more and more restricted to the study of a class. His character will ever remain the

precious possession of his kindred and his people. In all the annals of his race none has excelled it.

Among his characteristics his humanity stands forth to distinguish him forever from possibly nearly all his contemporaries. Colonel Charles Marshall, of his staff, who knew him best among men, declares that he never put a spy to death, and the story is well known of his clemency in the case of a deserter who had been found guilty by a court-martial, and condemned to death. It was during the terrible campaign of 1864, when the women at home wrote such heart-rending accounts of their want to their husbands in the field, that Lee was compelled to forbid the mails to be delivered. A soldier who had disappeared from his regiment and gone home was arrested and tried as a deserter. His defence was a letter which he had received from his wife, which showed that she and her children were starving. It was held insufficient, and he was sentenced to be shot. The case, however, was so pitiful that it was finally presented to General Lee. He wrote beneath the finding his approval, and then below that, an order that the man should immediately rejoin his regiment. There were, of course, unhappily, other instances enough in which discipline had to be enforced, and when the exigency arose he was rock. But, as has

been well said by Mr. Charles Francis Adams, possibly his surest and loftiest title to enduring fame was, "his humanity in arms and his scrupulous regard for the most advanced rules of modern warfare."*

An incident, small in itself, but illustrative of the compassionate character of Lee occurred during one of his fiercest battles. He was standing with officers of his staff in the yard of a dwelling on an eminence, when the group attracted the attention of the enemy and a hot fire was directed on them. General Lee suggested to his companions to go to a less exposed spot, but he himself remained where he was. A little later as he moved about he stooped and picked up a young bird, and, walking across the yard, placed the fledgling on a limb in a place of security.

It was characteristic of him that ordinarily, wherever he might be, he slept in a tent, for fear of incommoding the occupants of the houses he might have taken for his headquarters, and at times when he was inspecting the long lines from Richmond to Petersburg, he even hesitated to seek shelter at night in the camp of an acquaintance lest he might inconvenience him.†

* Address delivered at Lexington, Virginia, January 19, 1907.

† Long's "Lee," quoting Col. Thomas H. Carter.

He writes later, during the stress of war, to his eldest son, ". . . I hope we will be able to do something for the servants. I executed a deed of manumission embracing all the names sent me by your mother, and some that I recollected, but as I had nothing to refer to but my memory, I fear many were omitted. It was my desire to manumit all the people of your grandfather, whether present on the several estates or not. I believe your mother only sent me the names of those present at W.[hite] H.[ouse], and Romancoke. Those that have left with the enemy may not require their manumission. Still, some may be found hereafter in the State, and, at any rate, I wished to give a complete list, and to liberate all to show that your grandfather's wishes, so far as I was concerned, had been fulfilled. . . . I shall pay wages to Perry [his body-servant], and retain him until he or I can do better. You can do the same with Billy. The rest that are hired out had better be furnished with their papers and be let go. But what can be done with those at the W. H. and Romancoke? Those at and about Arlington can take care of themselves, I hope, and I have no doubt but all are gone who desire to do so. At any rate, I can do nothing for them now." *

* Letter to General G. W. C. Lee, January 11th, 1863.

In another letter, dated March 31, 1863, he writes further showing his solicitude about his freed servants. One he wishes a place gotten for on a Railway; two others who had been hired out he advises to remain where they are till the end of the year, when they are to have their earnings devoted to their own benefit. "But what can be done," he asks, "with poor little Jim? It would be cruel to turn him out on the world. He could not take care of himself." *

This is an epitome of the old Virginian's relation to his servants, and it will be observed that this representative of his class never speaks of them as his slaves, even in discussing intimately with his son their legal status.

His love of children and his companionship with them shine forth in his letters, and mark the simplicity that is so often allied to true greatness. In one of his letters to his wife long before the war, when he was on duty in the West, he gives a glimpse of this tenderness toward children which ever distinguished him. He says of a ride he took: ". . . I saw a number of little girls, all dressed up in their white frocks and pantalets, their hair plaited and tied up with ribbons, running and chasing each other in all directions. I counted twenty-three

* Jones's "Life and Letters of Robert E. Lee," pp. 286–287.

nearly the same size. As I drew up my horse to admire the spectacle, a man appeared at the door with the twenty-fourth in his arms. 'My friend,' said I, 'are all these your children?'

"'Yes,' he said, 'and there are nine more in the house and this is my youngest.'

"Upon further inquiry, however, I found that they were only temporarily his. He said, however, that he had been admiring them before I came up, and just wished that he had a million of dollars, and that they were all his in reality. I do not think the eldest exceeded seven or eight years old. It was the prettiest sight I have seen in the West, and, perhaps, in my life. . . ."

Such was the heart of this great Captain who, to some, seemed cold and aloof when, as Emerson says, his genius only protected itself by solitude.

Writing, years after, to his wife, of three little girls, the children of an old neighbor who had lived near them in happier days at Arlington, who had paid him a visit in his camp near Petersburg, each with a basket in which they had brought him fresh eggs, pickles and a pair of socks, "I begged them," he said, "to bring me nothing but their kisses and to keep the eggs, corn, etc., for themselves."

Of Lee's tranquil mind even amid the most difficult conditions, we have constant proof. No apparent disadvantage of position no threats or impending dangers appear to have disturbed that equanimity which so marks him as among the great.

While McClellan, accepting the wildest statements of "intelligent contrabands" was rating the force in his front at two and a half times its actual numbers and was throwing away precious time while he clamored for reinforcements, and while his successors often saw a vast army in their front whose shadows caused them much delay, Lee, from the first, even amid the deepest darkness of the situation saw with a clearness which no gloom could obscure. Writing from his camp, during the Western Virginia campaign he says: "The force of the enemy estimated by prisoners captured is put down at from 17,000 to 20,000. General Floyd thinks 18,000. I do not think it exceeds 9,000 or 10,000, but it exceeds ours." *

From camp near Orange Court House he writes on the eve of the battle of Second Manassas, under date of August 17, 1862: "General Pope says he is very strong and seems to

* Letter to Mrs. Lee, October 7, 1861; letter to his son, Major W. H. F. Lee, October 12, 1861.

feel so; for he is moving apparently up the Rapidan. I hope he will not prove stronger than we are. I learn since I have left that General McClellan has moved down the James River, with his whole army, so we shall have busy times. Burnside and King from Fredericksburg have joined Pope, which from their own report has swelled Pope to 92,000. I do not believe it, though I believe he is very big."

"General Hooker," he wrote, "is agitating something on the other side, or at all events he is agitating his troops. . . . Yesterday he was marching his men up and down the river. . . ."

And again, "General Hooker is airing himself north of the Rappahannock and again threatening us with a crossing. . . . I think he will consider it a few days." And this of an enemy who had, by his own field-reports a little later, 137,378 men, whom he had pronounced "the finest army on the planet," while Lee had only 53,303. But if Hooker prided himself on his fine army, Lee had no less confidence in his own, however outnumbered. "I agree with you," he wrote Hood, "in believing that our army would be invincible if properly organized and officered. There never were such men in an army before. They will go anywhere and do anything if properly led. But there is the diffi-

culty—proper commanders; where can they be obtained?" *

Once he wrote, "General Hooker is obliged to do something: I do not know what it will be. He is playing the Chinese game, trying what frightening will do. He runs out his guns, starts his wagons and troops up and down the river and creates an excitement generally. Our men look on in wonder, give a cheer, and all again subsides *in statu quo ante bellum.*" †

It has been customary to think of piety as the peculiar attribute of Jackson, the Puritan in type, rather than of Lee, the Cavalier. But, if possible, Lee was even more pious than his great Lieutenant. In fact, both were men who, in the early prime of their manhood, consecrated themselves to God, and thenceforth served him with a single heart. It shines forth in every page they ever penned. It was the basis of their character; it formed the foundation of that wonderful poise which, amid the most difficult and arduous situations left them the supreme tranquillity which was the field in which their powers found exercise. No one can familiarize himself with Lee's life without seeing that he was a man consecrated to the work of his

* Letter to General J. B. Hood, May 21, 1863.

† Letter to his daughter Agnes, February 26, 1863.

Divine Master and amid all conditions possessed a mind stayed on Him.

Not Cromwell's army was more religious than that which followed Lee, and the great Protector was not so pious as the great Captain who led the army of Northern Virginia.

The principle on which he acted was stated in one of his letters: "We are all in the hands of a kind God," he wrote, "who will do for us what is best, and more than we deserve, and we have only to endeavor to deserve more and to do our duty to Him and to ourselves. May we all deserve His mercy, His care and His protection."*

Such was the man to whom Virginia confided the leadership of her soldiery.

His advice to his youngest son, whom he had advised on leaving college to enlist in a good company, was characteristic of him: "To be obedient to all authority, and to do his duty in everything, great or small." †

It was also characteristic alike of him and of the soldiery of the South that he should have refused to procure for this son a commission, as long afterward he promptly discountenanced the idea of promoting his eldest son (though a soldier so accomplished that he

* Letter of September 1, 1856; cited in Jones's "Lee" p. 81.

† "Recollections of General Lee," by Captain R. E. Lee.

wished for him as his chief of staff) over the heads of officers who had served under him and proved their capacity under his eye.

"I do not think," says the former, in his interesting "Recollections" of his father, "that it ever occurred to my father to have me, or rather get me, a position in the army. I know it never occurred to me, nor did I ever hear at that time or afterward from any one that I might have been entitled to better rank because of my father's prominence in Virginia and in the Confederacy." *

It was not until that son had fought as a private through the Valley campaigns of Jackson, the battles around Richmond, the Maryland campaign, and had distinguished himself,† that he received the promotion to the staff of his brother, General Wm. H. F. Lee.

Indeed, one of the troubles with which Lee had to contend was the efforts made by politicians in the civil government to procure commissions and promotions for their constituents, and the delay experienced in getting his recommendations for promotion for merit acted on.

The fact constitutes one of the few com-

* "Recollections of General Lee," by R. E. Lee.

† Moore's "Recollections of a Cannoneer under Jackson." Neale Co.

plaints in his letters, and he set the example by steadfastly setting his face against any favoritism toward his own family. His two sons who became generals, were both officers in the old army and were both in the retreat to Appomattox until one of them was captured with five other general officers and some 6,000 men at Taylor's Creek in one of the last fights of the war. Of their character some idea may be formed from the fact that when one of them, General Wm. H. F. Lee was held as a hostage under sentence of death, the other, General G. W. C. Lee, wrote, asking to be accepted as a hostage in his stead, placing the offer on the ground that his brother had a wife and child, while he, his equal in rank, and the eldest son, was unmarried.

Of his son's confinement under sentence as a hostage which, the father says, was "grievous" to him, Lee writes to his other son. "I had seen in the papers the intention announced by the Federal government of holding him as a hostage for the two captains selected to be shot. If it is right to shoot those men this should make no difference in their execution; but I have not thought it right to shoot them, and differ in my ideas from most of our people on the subject of reprisal. Sometimes I know it to be necessary, but it should not be resorted to at all

times, and in our case policy dictates that it should be avoided whenever possible." *

Happy the people that can produce such a father and such sons!

It is told of Sidney that, when wounded and perishing of thirst, some one brought him water, and he ordered it given to a dying soldier whose need was greater than his. Hardly a soldier in Lee's army would not have done that which gave Sidney fame. Such was the temper and character of the men who followed Lee, and such was the temper and character of their beloved commander, whom they loved to call in affectionate phrase, "Marse Robert." He was their idol and their ideal, and his impress was stamped on his army.

The Master whom he so faithfully and humbly tried to serve, whose precepts were ever in his heart and whose spirit shone ever in his life, had laid down for him the law: "And to the soldiers he said, Do violence to no man."

This high rule, like all others of his Divine Master, Lee ever followed and so far as possible, inculcated on his army, by whom, to their eternal honor be it said, the noble example was nobly followed. Unhappily for the world and for the future reputation of some who otherwise

* Letter to General G. W. C. Lee, August 7, 1863.

might as able soldiers have won the admiration of a whole people, rather than of a mere section of that people, though gentlemen like McClellan, McDowell, Burnside and the gentlemen who followed them conducted war on high principles, it was not the invariable rule among all commanders.

Butler had damned himself to everlasting fame by orders and acts in Louisiana which no soldier can think of without a blush.* Hunter, in despite of expostulations, had burnt his way through the beautiful valley where Lee was to find his last resting place; and had left in his track the scarred and blackened ruins of countless dwellings. To the honor of the brave men he commanded it is said that he "had to deprive forty of his commissioned officers of their commands before he could carry into execution his infamous orders."† Even Halleck declared his action "barbarous."‡ It was reserved for Sherman, possibly the second greatest general on the Northern side, to reverse most completely

* In his infamous "Order 28" he had ordered that any woman in New Orleans who should "by word, or gesture, or movement insult or show contempt for any officer or soldier of the United States, should be regarded and treated as a woman of the town, plying her avocation."

† "Official Report of History Com., Grand Camp C. V., in 'The Confederate Cause,'" p. 103.

‡ Sherman's "Memoirs," II, p. 129.

the advances of civilization and hark back almost to the ferocious methods of mediævalism. To find the proof of this, one has no need to go outside of this officer's own recorded words.

"War is hell," he was quoted long after as saying. He did more than all others to make it so. He ruthlessly devastated not only for the needs of his army and to deprive his enemy of subsistence, but to horrify and appall. He made war not only on men, but on women and children. He deliberately strove to carry terror into the hearts of the defenceless.

"In nearly all his dispatches after he had reached the sea," says Rhodes, an historian from his State, who is his apologist and his admirer, "he gloated over the destruction of property." *

He gloated over the havoc he wrought, first in anticipation, as he wrote how he could "make a wreck of the country from Chattanooga to Atlanta, including the latter city," † and again, how he could "make Georgia howl";‡ next, in the act of its perpetration, as he issued his orders for his army to "forage liberally on the country," and expressly forbade his officers to give receipts for property taken; authorized the wanton

* Rhodes's "History of the United States," Vol. V, p. 22.
† Official Records, Vol. XXXIX, Pt. 2, p. 202.
‡ Official Records, Vol. XXXIX, Pt. 3, p. 162.

destruction of mills and houses; and while subordinate officers like Howard and Cox and Schofield were writhing under the robberies of defenceless women, extending even to the tearing of rings from their fingers, chuckled over the robberies committed by his men—who quoted his orders to his face—and reviewed his "bummers," an organized corps of robbers, who have never had their counterpart since the Free Companies passed from the stage under the awakening conscience of modern Europe.

If these are strong words they are largely taken from his own writings.

He sent an express message to the corps commander at General Howell Cobb's plantation, General Davis, "to explain whose plantation it was and instruct him to spare nothing."* This was but warring on women, for Cobb was in his honored grave two years ere this, having fallen at the foot of Marye's Heights, as a brave man falls, holding back brave men. "I would not restrain the army," he wrote coolly, "lest its vigor and energy should be impaired."†

Speaking of the burning of Columbia, which Sherman wrote his brother he had in his report "distinctly charged to General Wade Hamil-

* Sherman's "Memoirs," Vol. II, p. 185.
† Sherman's "Memoirs," II, p. 255.

ton," he adds, "I confess I did so pointedly to shake the faith of his people in him." * A distinguished historian from his own State has declared of this destruction of Columbia, a defenceless city which had surrendered, that, "It was the most monstrous barbarity of this barbarous march. Before his movements began, General Sherman had begged permission to turn his army loose in South Carolina and devastate it. He used this permission to the full. He protested that he did not wage war upon women and children. But under the operations of his orders the last morsel of food was taken from hundreds of destitute families that his soldiers might feast in needless and riotous abundance. Before his eyes, rose day after day, the mournful clouds of smoke on every side that told of old people and their grandchildren driven in mid-winter from the only roofs that were to shelter them, by the flames which the wantonness of his soldiers had kindled. Yet, if a single soldier was punished for a single outrage or theft during that entire movement we have found no mention of it in all the voluminous records of the march." †

Place Lee's general order from Chambersburg

* Sherman's "Memoirs," II. p. 287.

† "Ohio in the War," by Hon. Whitelaw Reid.

on invading Pennsylvania, beside Sherman's correspondence with Halleck, and let posterity judge thereby the character of the commanders. Halleck, Chief of Staff and military adviser to President Lincoln, writes to Sherman, "Should you capture Charleston, I hope that by some accident the place might be destroyed, and if a little salt should be sown upon its site it might prevent the growth of future crops of nullification and secession," and Sherman replies,* "I will bear in mind your hint as to Charleston, and do not think salt will be necessary. When I move on, the fifteenth corps will be on the right wing, and their position will bring them naturally into Charleston first, and if you have watched the history of that corps you have remarked that they generally do up their work pretty well."

While this general was giving orders to burn mills and destroy all food sources on which non-combatants depended for life, and to convey prisoners first, or if prisoners were wanting, then non-combatant inhabitants, over all bridges and other places suspected of being mined, and "could hardly help laughing at their stepping so gingerly along the road where it was supposed sunk-

* Dispatch of December 24, 1864. Sherman's "Memoirs," II, pp. 223, 227–228.

en torpedoes might explode at each step";* and while even Grant, not yet risen to his last splendid act of magnanimity, as he came to rise in the long vigils before Petersburg, was expressing his hope to Hunter that his troops would "eat out Virginia clear and clean, as far as they could go, so that crows flying over it for the balance of the season would have to carry their provender with them";†—Lee, as he marched into Pennsylvania, issued orders to his troops to remember that they made war only on armed men, and that no greater disgrace could befall the army, and through it the whole South, than the perpetration of barbarous outrages on the innocent and defenceless. This whole order can never be too frequently repeated. It gives the man as he was.

Hdqrs. Army of Northern Va.,
Chambersburg, Pa., June 27, 1863.

Genl. Order No. 72.

The Commanding General has observed with marked satisfaction the conduct of the troops on the march, and confidently anticipates results commensurate with the high spirit they have manifested. No troops could have displayed greater fortitude or

* Sherman's "Memoirs," II, p. 194.
†Official Records, Vol. XXXVII, Pt. 2, pp. 300, 301.

better performed the arduous marches of the past ten days. Their conduct in other respects has, with few exceptions, been in keeping with their character as soldiers and entitles them to approbation and praise.

There have, however, been instances of forgetfulness on the part of some that they have in keeping the yet unsullied reputation of the army, and that the duties exacted of us by civilization and Christianity are not less obligatory in the country of the enemy than in our own. The Commanding General considers that no greater disgrace would befall the Army, and through it our whole people, than the perpetration of the barbarous outrages upon the innocent and defenceless and the wanton destruction of private property that have marked the course of the enemy in our own country. Such proceedings not only disgrace the perpetrators and all connected with them, but are subversive of the discipline and efficiency of the army and obstructive to the ends of our present movements. It must be remembered that we make war only on armed men and that we cannot take vengeance for the wrong our people have suffered without lowering ourselves in the eyes of all whose abhorrence has been excited by the atrocities of our enemy, and offending against Him to whom vengeance belongeth, without whose favor and support our efforts must all prove in vain.

The Commanding General, therefore, earnestly exhorts the troops to abstain with most scrupulous care from unnecessary or wanton injury to private property,

and he enjoins upon all officers to arrest and bring to summary punishment all who shall in any way offend against the orders on this subject.

R. E. Lee,
General.

Colonel Freemantle of the British Army, who was along with the army, says: "I saw no straggling into the houses; nor were any of the inhabitants disturbed or annoyed by the soldiers. I went into Chambersburg and witnessed the singular good behavior of the troops toward the citizens. To one who has seen the ravages of the Northern troops in Southern towns this forbearance seems most commendable and surprising."

It is a record of general and of men of which the South may well be proud.

CHAPTER XI

GETTYSBURG

POSSIBLY, one other fault in Lee as a soldier may appear to some: that he accounted the abilities of the opposing armies at less than their true value. Study of the war must lead to the conviction that neither courage nor fortitude was the monopoly of either side. The men who withstood at Malvern Hill the fierce charges of the Southern infantry; the men who marched down the rolling plain of Second Manassas against Stonewall Jackson's lines of flame, and dashed like the surging sea, wave upon wave, on Lee's iron ranks at Antietam; the men who charged impregnable defences at Marye's Heights; the men who climbed the slippery steeps of Chattanooga and swept the crimson plain of Franklin; the men who maintained their positions under the leaden sleet of the Wilderness and seized the Bloody Angle at Spottsylvania; the men who died at Cold Harbor, rank on rank, needed to ask no odds for valor of any troops on earth, not even of the men who followed Lee.

In a recent discussion of this subject, the philosophical Charles Francis Adams, himself a veteran of the Army of the Potomac, whose laurels were won in opposing Lee, quotes with approval Lee's proud declaration that, "there never were such men in an army before. They will go anywhere and do anything if properly led." "And for myself," he adds, "I do not think the estimate thus expressed was exaggerated. Speaking deliberately, having faced some portions of the Army of Northern Virginia at the time, and having reflected much on the occurrences of that momentous period, I do not believe that any more formidable, or better organized and animated force was ever set in motion than that which Lee led across the Potomac in the early summer of 1863. It was essentially an army of fighters—men who individually or in the mass could be depended upon for any feat of arms in the power of mere mortals to accomplish. They would blench at no danger. This Lee, from experience, knew. He had tested them; they had full confidence in him."*

Lee's error, such as it was, lay not in over-rating his own weapon, but in undervaluing the larger weapon of his antagonist. Yet, if this under-rating of his enemy was a fault it

* Address at Lexington, Virginia, cited *ante*.

was a noble one; and how often it led to victory! Lee's success was due largely to his splendid audacity.

If, in attacking the redoubtable forces of Meade on the heights of Gettysburg, he overestimated the ability of that army of sixty thousand Southern men who wore the gray, who can wonder? In their rags and tatters, ill-shod and ill-armed, they were the flower of the South. Had he not seen them on every field since Mechanicsville? Seen them, under his masterly tactics and inspiring eye, sweep McClellan's mighty army from the very gates of Richmond? Seen them send Pope, routed and demoralized, to the shelter of the fortifications around Alexandria? Seen them repel McClellan's furious charges on the field of Antietam and hold him at bay with a fresh army at his back? Seen them drive Burnside's valorous men back to their entrenchments? Seen them roll Hooker's great army up as a scroll and hurl it back across the Rappahannock? What was disparity of numbers to him? What strength of position? His greatest victories had been plucked by daring, which hitherto fortune had proved the wisest of calculation, from the jaws of apparent impossibility. Besides, who knew so well as he the necessity of

striking such a blow? The Southwest was being gradually conquered. Vicksburg, the last stronghold of the Confederacy on the Mississippi, was in the last throes of a fatal siege, and, on the same day that Lee faced his fate at the heights of Gettysburg, fell, and the Confederate South was cut in two. His delivering battle here under such conditions has been often criticised. He is charged with having violated a canon of war. He replied to his critics once that even so dull a man as himself could see clearly enough his mistakes after they were committed.

This battle, now generally esteemed the crucial battle of the war, has been fought over so often and so fully that it is not necessary to go over its details now, and to do so is not within the scope of this volume, which only deals with Lee's military genius as borne evidence to by his audacity. Gettysburg was only one factor in the unbroken chain of proof to establish his boldness and his resolution. Southern historians have unanimously placed the chief responsibility for his defeat on Longstreet, whose tendency to be dilatory and obstinate has been noted in connection with the fields of Seven Pines, Frazer's Farm and Second Manassas, and whose slowness and surliness now probably cost Lee this battle and possibly cost the South,

if not its independence, at least the offer of honorable terms. And in this estimate of him many other competent critics concur. "Lee," says Henderson in his "Life of Stonewall Jackson," "lost the battle of Gettysburg because he allowed his second in command to argue instead of marching." * Lee, we know, held him in high esteem, speaking of him as his "old war horse," and was too magnanimous ever to give countenance to the furious clamor which later assailed his sturdy if opinionated and bull-headed lieutenant. Longstreet seems, indeed, to have been not unlike a bull, ponderous and dull until aroused, but once aroused by the sight of blood, terrible in his fury and a ferocious fighter. But the question here is, did Lee err or not in fighting the battle.

In brief, the battle of Gettysburg came of the necessity to "yield to a stronger power than General Burnside." Feeling the imperative necessity of relieving Virginia of the burden that was crushing her to the earth, Lee determined as the summer of 1863 drew near, to manœuvre Hooker from his impregnable position on the Stafford Heights and to transfer the theatre of war to Northern soil. His army, though not large, was a veteran body who, properly

* Vol. II, p. 488.

led, would go anywhere and do anything they were ordered to do. Accordingly, in the first week of June (from the 3d to the 7th), Lee, leaving A. P. Hill to occupy the lines at Fredericksburg and cover Richmond, withdrew the major portion of his force to Culpeper, and directed them from there to the Shenandoah Valley, which he immediately cleared of the enemy, capturing in the several engagements fought in his advance from Culpeper to Winchester, over 4,000 men, 29 pieces of artillery and many stores.

As he anticipated, his strategy drew Hooker back toward the Potomac, and Longstreet was moved forward on the eastern side of the Blue Ridge, while A. P. Hill followed Ewell over the mountains into the Valley of Virginia, the whole being screened by Stuart's cavalry.

By the middle of the month (June) Lee's advanced corps had crossed the Potomac and Longstreet was ordered soon afterward to do the same, while Stuart was left to impede Hooker should he attempt to follow across the Potomac, it being left to Stuart's discretion whether to cross east or west of the Blue Ridge; but on crossing he was to cover the right of the army. On the 21st, Ewell was ordered to advance in the direction of Harrisburg, and he reached Carlisle on

the 27th. On the same day Longstreet and A. P. Hill reached the vicinity of Chambersburg. Up to this time no information had come from any source of the crossing of the Potomac by the Federal army, and it was not until the 28th that Lee was apprised by one of his scouts that the army had crossed several days before and was near South Mountain. Lee promptly decided to concentrate his forces on the east of the mountains, and Hill was ordered to Cashtown, to the north-westward of Gettysburg, to which place a turnpike ran, with Longstreet following next day.

On the morning of the 30th, Pettigrew's brigade, of Heth's division, was ordered to the little town of Gettysburg, a few miles away, to get shoes and other supplies of which it stood sorely in need, and found it occupied by the enemy, who were not known to be nearer than fifteen miles away. General Lee having arrived at Cashtown on the morning of July 1st, Heth was sent to ascertain the force of the enemy, but was ordered if he found infantry in force to report the fact and not force an engagement. At this time Hill had two divisions up and the third not far in the rear, and Ewell was on his way, having been ordered to recall his divisions and concentrate about Cashtown. Before long

the sound of artillery from the direction of Gettysburg gave evidence that an engagement was on, and General Lee, accompanied by Hill, hastened to the front, where they found that the enemy's artillery and infantry, who were present in considerable force, had driven Heth's two advanced brigades back, and the whole division was now hotly engaged.

This was the beginning of the famous three days' battle of Gettysburg; for from this time on the conflict continued with only the intermissions due to darkness and the need for fresh troops. Heth's division would have paid dearly for their shoes had not Ewell learned that morning that Hill was moving toward Gettysburg and headed his column in that direction, and had not Rhodes, whose division was in the lead, caught the sound of guns and pushed forward, "making his dispositions" for the battle as he hurried on. Even when he reached the field he found the force before him so strong that he was glad to hold his own, and it was not until Early reached the field and put in his division on the left that they forced back the enemy's right, as Pender, rushing to Heth's relief, made good his advance and the enemy were driven in disorder from the field, through the town and on beyond to the heights where one of

Steinwehr's brigades of the Eleventh Corps lay in reserve. It was a stubborn and bloody conflict, with from twenty-two thousand to twenty-four thousand men on either side, and while it resulted in a clear victory for the Confederate troops, who not only swept the field but captured some 5,000 prisoners, the loss on both sides was heavy. General Lee, who was an eyewitness of the victory, sent his adjutant-general with a message to Ewell to say that "from the position he occupied he could see the enemy retreating over those hills without organization and in great confusion, and that it was only necessary to press those people in order to secure possession of the heights and that, if possible, he wished him to do this." * General Ewell, however, "deemed it unwise to make the pursuit," for fear, probably, as Taylor conjectures, of bringing on a general engagement. However this was, the pursuit was not pressed, though Gordon, who was in the full tide of victory, required three or four orders "of the most peremptory character" before he stayed his eager troops.

Ewell halted his men on the field, and that night the Federals fortified the heights and as new troops came pouring in by forced marches,

* Taylor's "General Lee," p. 190.

the lines were rapidly strengthened with entrenchments. At this time the commanding position of Culp's Hill was unoccupied. Hancock states that he ordered Wadsworth's division and a battery to take position there in the afternoon. But two of Ewell's staff officers reported to him that they were on the hill at dark.

Meade, at Taneytown, Maryland, thirteen miles away, with the Second Corps, received Hancock's report of the situation that afternoon, and, issuing orders with a promptness which bore rich fruit, he marched for the heights commanding the battlefield, where he arrived at 1 in the morning. There was discussion as to the availability of the position and Meade at one time thought of withdrawing from it. The Fifth Corps, that evening, was at Union Mills, twenty-three miles away, and the Sixth Corps was at Manchester, thirty-four to thirty-six miles away. Lee's army lay close to the battle-field, and might attack before his troops got up or might interpose between him and Washington.* Longstreet says he himself opposed further fighting there.

Lee, however, was ready for the fight and believed he could destroy Meade in detail. He

* Meade to Halleck. Dispatch, 2 P. M., July 2, 1863.

had a talk with Longstreet on Seminary Ridge that afternoon at 5 o'clock, and that evening he held a conference in the captured town of Gettysburg with Ewell, Early and Rhodes; where it was determined that Longstreet, whose troops were only four miles away, should begin the battle in the morning, by seizing the commanding positions on the enemy's left and thus be enabled to enfilade Meade's flank, while he was attacked by Hill and Early. Lee left the conference to give the order, and that night told General Wm. N. Pendleton, his chief of artillery, that he "had ordered General Longstreet to attack on the flank at sunrise next morning." * At daybreak Lee himself was ready and waiting for the battle to begin; but Longstreet, who the evening before had been averse to attacking, says he sought him out again at daybreak and renewed his views against making the attack on this side, an expostulation which caused Lee to send a staff officer to Ewell to ascertain whether, after examining the position by daylight, he could not attack. The position in front of Ewell was, however, now too strongly fortified to make an assault possible, and Meade in contemplation of

* "Life of General Wm. N. Pendleton," by S. P. Lee. Fitzhugh Lee's "Lee."

assuming the offensive, was massing his forces there. Lee even then rode himself to confer with Ewell, but finding what the situation was, adhered to his original decision and ordered Longstreet at 11 o'clock to attack as already directed.

Even then, however, Longstreet held back—whether from obstinacy and refractoriness, or because "his heart was not in it" longer, or because he felt the situation hopeless—the two former of which reasons have been charged against him, and the last of which has been claimed by him, has ever been a question hotly debated. However it was, though his troops, except one brigade, Law's, were encamped close to the battlefield, he failed to move until half the day had been lost, because, as he said, he hated to go into battle with one boot off; and when he moved, Round Top was fully protected. Meade had changed his plan of attacking with his right and had strengthened his left; Sedgwick's corps, the Sixth, had come up after an epoch-making march of thirty-six miles since 9 o'clock the night before and was in position while Longstreet sulked and dawdled with his eager troops awaiting orders on the edge of the battlefield.

Even as it was, in the furious battle which

took place that afternoon when Longstreet at last began to fight, Lee seized Big Round Top, held it for some time, and passed beyond it; turned Sickles's left and made a lodgment on Little Round Top, behind which Sedgwick's Sixth Corps, white with the dust of their thirty-six miles march, was massed on the Taneytown road; which Meade declared "the key-point of his whole position," and held it with his brave Alabamians until driven back by the Fifth Corps, massed for the purpose, and this, if held, would, Meade states, "have prevented him from holding any of the ground he subsequently held to the last." At nightfall Lee had secured possession of the important position known as "The Devil's Den," the Ridge on the Emmitsburg Pike, made lodgment on the bases of both Round Tops; made an impression on the Federal centre, and had occupied a portion of the works on the Federal right.* It was enough to lead Lee to report that the conditions "induced the belief, that with proper concert of action, and with the increased support that the positions gained on the right would enable the artillery to render the assaulting columns, we

* *Cf.* Fitzhugh Lee's "Life of Lee."

Lieutenant-Colonel Henderson's Review of General Longstreet's "From Manassas to Appomattox," cited *ante;* General Humphrey's "Gettysburg Campaign."

should ultimately succeed, and it was accordingly determined to continue the attack." *

Longstreet at Gettysburg is a subject that few Southerners can contemplate with philosophic calm. It used to be common soon after the war for old Confederate officers to declare that he should have been shot immediately after the battle, and that Napoleon would certainly have done so. But Lee was cast in a different mould. Of all his army he possibly knew most fully how absolutely Longstreet had frustrated his plans, and certainly of all he treated him with most leniency. But while he was assuming the burden of the responsibility and wrote Longstreet the affectionate letters of an old brother in arms who knew his worth and overlooked his errors, Longstreet, with what was not far from ingratitude, was placing on Lee the blame for his own shortcoming and was claiming that had he been allowed to dictate the plan of the campaign the result would have been different.

After General Lee was in his honored grave, Longstreet published his own defence, in which he undertook to prove that Lee had made eleven grave errors in the precipitation and conduct of the battle of Gettysburg. He says that he opposed fighting the battle of Gettysburg and that

* Lee's Report.

when he, on the evening of the 1st, gave his opinion to General Lee that they could not have called the enemy to a position better suited to their plans, and that all they had to do was to file round his left and secure good ground between him and his capital, he was astonished at Lee's impatience, and his vehement declaration, "If he is there to-morrow, I will attack him," and thereupon he observes, "His desperate mood was painfully evident and gave rise to serious apprehensions." All of which was written long afterward and as a defence against the quite general and serious criticism of his own conduct as the cause of Lee's failure.

But why should Lee have been in a desperate mood? He had an army on which he knew he could count to do anything if they were properly led. He had gone into the North to fight; he had just seen a part of his force roll two fine army corps, fighting furiously, back through the town and over the heights, in confusion, leaving in his hands 5,000 captives, and he knew that the bulk of the Federal army was from four to nine times as far from the field as his own corps. His reason for fighting next morning was, therefore, not his desperation, but his apparently well-grounded hope that he should win a battle before Meade could concentrate, and

then be in a position to force terms. His position has commended itself to clear-headed soldiers since,* and the criticism of it is retroactive and based on events which should not have occurred and in all human probability would not, but for Longstreet's slowness if not his bull-headedness.

Lee, as he waited next morning for Longstreet to move forward, gave Hood, who had been on the ground since daybreak, his chief reason for fighting. "The enemy is here," he said, "and if we don't whip him he will whip us." It was a sound reason and has been approved by good critics, and had Longstreet not dallied or sulked for more than half the day, it might have been justified before dark fell on the night of the 2d of July. As we see Longstreet, fooling away the hours while spade and shovel rang along the green crest piling up the earthworks, and while Sedgwick's Sixth Corps, hot-footed, pushed along the dusty roads, telling off the long miles hour after hour, we may well understand how different the result would have been had but Stonewall Jackson commanded that day the bronzed and eager divisions lying all

* Lieutenant-Colonel G. F. R. Henderson's review of Longstreet's "From Manassas to Appomattox." "Journal of Royal United Service Inst.," October, 1897.

morning with stacked arms awaiting orders. Doubtless it was this that was in Lee's mind when, long afterward, he said, "If I had had Jackson at Gettysburg, as far as human reason can see, I should have won a great victory."

The next day Lee assaulted and was repelled in what is known to soldiers as the third day's battle; but his defeat was accomplished in the first half of the preceding day, when Longstreet failed to carry out his orders, and the golden opportunity was lost.

As the scope of this discussion includes only the question of Lee's ability as a general in offensive operations, it is not within its province to go further into the details of this great battle, except to show that on this day Longstreet again delayed and faltered, and that this time his slowness destroyed finally all possibility of success. This cannot be better shown than by quoting from the illuminating review of his book by Lieutenant-Colonel, afterward Brigadier-General, G. F. R. Henderson, already cited.

"His conduct on the third day," declares this critic, "opens up a still graver issue. The First Army Corps when at length, on the afternoon of July 2d, it was permitted to attack, had achieved a distinct success. The enemy was driven back to his main position with enormous

loss. On the morning of July 3d, Lee determined to assault that position in front and flank, simultaneously; and, according to his chief of the staff, Longstreet's corps was to make the main attack on the centre, while the Second Corps attacked the right. But again there was delay, and this time it was fatal. . . . We may note that according to Longstreet's own testimony the order (to attack) was given soon after sunrise, and yet, although the Second Corps attacking the Federal right became engaged at daylight, it was not until 1 P. M., eight hours later, that the artillery of the First Corps opened fire, and not till 2 P. M. that the infantry advanced. Their assault was absolutely isolated. The Second Corps had already been beaten back. The Third Corps, although a division who were ready to move to any point to which Longstreet might indicate, was not called upon for assistance. Two divisions of his own corps, posted on the right flank, did absolutely nothing, and after a supremely gallant effort the 15,000 men who were hurled against the front of the Federal army, and some of whom actually penetrated the position, were repulsed with fearful slaughter."

After discussing in detail Longstreet's tactics and action, this thoughtful critic adds: "But

the crucial question is this: *Why did he delay his attack for eight hours*, during which time the Second Corps with which he was to coöperate was heavily engaged? If he moved only under compulsion, if he deliberately forebore to use his best efforts to carry out Lee's design, and to compel him to adopt his own, the case is very different. That he did so seems perfectly clear." "If Lee was to blame at all in the Gettysburg campaign," adds Henderson, "it was in taking as his second in command a general who was so completely indifferent to the claim of discipline."

Had Lee's orders been obeyed, he would probably have won the battle of Gettysburg. He must have won it on the 2d of July, when he had "a fine opportunity of dealing with the enemy in detail"; he might have won it even on the 3d. But fate, that decides the issues of nations, decreed otherwise. The crown of Cemetery Ridge, seized and held for twenty minutes by that devoted band of gray-clad heroes, marks the highest tide, not of Confederate valor but of Confederate hope. Even so, it appeared at first but a drawn battle. The Army of Northern Virginia had struck Meade so terrible a blow that, as Halleck testified before the Commission on the Conduct of the War, a council was held to decide whether they should retreat.

All that day the two armies lay on the opposite hills like spent lions nursing their wounds, neither of them able to attack the other. Next day, Lee, with ammunition-chests nearly exhausted, fell slowly back to the Potomac, cautiously followed by his antagonist, and after waiting quietly for its swollen waters to subside recrossed into Virginia. It was a defeat, for Lee had failed of his purpose. But it was a defeat which barely touches his fame as a captain. No other captain or army in history might have done more.

The gallant and high-minded Meade was a little later superseded by his Government in favor of the victorious Grant and loyally served under him as commander of the Army of the Potomac to the end; but at the South, neither Lee nor his heroic army ever stood higher with the authorities or the southern people. His very defeat seems even now but the pedestal for a more exalted heroism. With a magnanimity too sublime for common men wholly to appreciate, he took all the blame for the failure on himself. History has traversed his unselfish statement and has placed the blame where it justly belongs: on those who failed to carry out the plan his genius had conceived.

Moved possibly by the criticism of the oppo-

sition press, for there was ever a hostile and intractable press attacking the Government of the Confederacy and reviling all its works, Lee wrote to Mr. Davis and proposed that he should be relieved by some younger and possibly more efficient man. His bodily strength was failing, he said, and he was dependent on the eyes of others. Mr. Davis promptly reassured him in a letter which goes far to explain the personal loyalty to him, not only of Lee, but of the South.

These letters give a picture of the two men in their relation to each other and to the cause they represented, and should be read in full by all who would understand the character of the two leaders of the Confederacy.

Lee's letter was as follows:

CAMP ORANGE, *August* 5, 1863.

MR. PRESIDENT:

Your letters of the 28th of July and 2d of August have been received, and I have waited for a leisure hour to reply, but I fear that will never come. I am extremely obliged to you for the attention given to the wants of this Army, and the efforts made to supply them. Our absentees are returning, and I hope the earnest and beautiful appeal made to the country in

your proclamation may stir up the whole people and that they may see their duty and perform it. Nothing is wanted but that their fortitude should equal their bravery to insure the success of our cause. We must expect reverses, even defeats. They are sent to teach us wisdom and prudence, to call forth greater energies, and to prevent our falling into greater disasters. Our people have only to be true and united, to bear manfully the misfortunes incident to war, and all will come right in the end. I know how prone we are to censure, and how ready to blame others for the non-fulfilment of our expectations. This is unbecoming in a generous people, and I grieve at its expression. The general remedy for the want of success in a military commander is his removal. This is natural, and in many instances proper; for no matter what may be the ability of the officer, if he loses the confidence of his troops, disaster must sooner or later ensue.

I have been prompted by these reflections more than once since my return from Pennsylvania to propose to your Excellency the propriety of selecting another commander for this Army. I have seen and heard of expressions of discontent in the public journals as the result of the expedition. I do not know how far this

feeling extends to the Army. My brother officers have been too kind to report it, and so far the troops have been too generous to exhibit it. It is fair, however, to suppose that it does exist, and success is so necessary to us that nothing should be left undone to secure it. I, therefore, in all sincerity, request your Excellency to take measures to supply my place. I do this with the more earnestness, because no one is more aware than myself of my inability to discharge the duties of my position. I cannot even accomplish what I myself desire. How can I fulfil the expectations of others? In addition, I sensibly feel the growing failure of my bodily strength. I have not yet recovered from the attack I experienced the past spring. I am becoming more and more incapable of exertion, and am thus prevented from making the personal examination, and giving the supervision to the operations in the field which I feel to be necessary. I am so dull, that in undertaking to use the eyes of others I am frequently misled.

Everything, therefore, points to the advantage to be derived from a new commander, and I the more anxiously urge the matter upon your Excellency from my belief that a younger and abler man than myself can be readily obtained.

I know that he will have as gallant and brave an army as ever existed to second his efforts, and it would be the happiest day of my life to see at its head a worthy leader—one that would accomplish more than I can perform and all that I have wished. I hope your Excellency will attribute my request to the true reason—the desire to serve my country and to do all in my power to insure the success of her righteous cause.

I have no complaints to make of any one but myself. I have received nothing but kindness from those above me, and the most considerate attention from my comrades and companions in arms. To your Excellency I am specially indebted for uniform kindness and consideration. You have done everything in your power to aid me in the work committed to my charge without omitting anything to promote the general welfare. I pray that your efforts may at length be crowned with success, and that you may long live to enjoy the thanks of a grateful people.

With sentiments of great esteem, I am,

Very respectfully and truly yours,

R. E. Lee.

General.

His Excellency Jefferson Davis, President Confederate States.

To this letter President Davis sent the following reply:

RICHMOND, VA., *August* 11, 1863.

GEN. R. E. LEE, Commanding Army of Northern Virginia:

Yours of the 8th inst. has just been received. I am glad that you concur so entirely with me as to the wants of our country in this trying hour, and am happy to add that after the first depression consequent upon our disasters in the West, indications have appeared that our people will exhibit that fortitude which we agree in believing is alone needed to secure ultimate success.

It well became Sydney Johnston when overwhelmed by a senseless clamor to admit the rule that success is the test of merit; and yet there has been nothing which I have found to require a greater effort of patience than to bear the criticisms of the ignorant who pronounce everything a failure which does not equal their expectations or desires, and can see no good result which is not in the line of their own imaginings.

I admit the propriety of your conclusions that an officer who loses the confidence of his troops should have his position changed, whatever may be his ability; but when I read the sentence I

was not at all prepared for the application you were about to make. Expressions of discontent in the public journals furnish but little evidence of the sentiment of the army. I wish it were otherwise, even though all the abuse of myself should be accepted as the results of honest observation. Were you capable of stooping to it, you could easily surround yourself with those who would fill the press with your laudations, and seek to exalt you for what you had not done, rather than detract from the achievements which will make you and your army the subject of history and the object of the world's admiration for generations to come.

I am truly sorry to know that you still feel the effects of the illness you suffered last spring, and can readily understand the embarrassments you experience in using the eyes of others, having been so much accustomed to make your own reconnaissances. Practice will, however, do much to relieve that embarrassment, and the minute knowledge of the country which you have acquired will render you less dependent for topographical information.

But suppose, my dear friend, that I were to admit, with all their implications, the points which you present, where am I to find the new commander who is to possess the greater ability

which you believe to be required? I do not doubt the readiness with which you would give way to one who could accomplish all that you have wished, and you will do me the justice to believe that if Providence should kindly offer such a person for our use I would not hesitate to avail myself of his services.

My sight is not sufficiently penetrating to discover such hidden merit, if it exists, and I have but used to you the language of sober earnestness when I have impressed upon you the propriety of avoiding all unnecessary exposure to danger, because I felt our country could not bear to lose you. To ask me to substitute for you some one, in my judgment, more fit to command or who would possess more of the confidence of the Army or of the reflecting men of the country, is to demand an impossibility. It only remains for me to hope that you will take all possible care of yourself, that your health and strength will be entirely restored, and that the Lord will preserve you for the important duties devolved upon you in the struggle of our suffering country for the independence which we have engaged in war to maintain.

As ever,

Very respectfully and truly,

JEFFERSON DAVIS

With these letters to portray the character of Lee, history will endorse with its infallible pen what the President of the Confederacy wrote: There was no better man to take his place.

Though Lee failed of final success, to the student of history who weighs opportunities and compares resources, this in no wise mars his fame. He lay in the face of the enemy twenty-four hours and then, with the swollen Potomac at his back, brought off his army intact and undisspirited and proceeded to prepare for the next campaign. Indeed, with the Army of the Potomac in his front, he sent two divisions under Longstreet to reinforce Bragg and defeat Rosecrans at Chickamauga. When Meade crossed the Rappahannock into Culpeper, Lee manœuvred so threateningly that Meade retired, and only the lack of shoes and equipment prevented Lee from again crossing the Potomac.*

The chief disaster of Gettysburg lay not so much in the first repulse of the intrepid lines, which, in the face of a constantly increasing storm of shot and shell, swept across that deadly plain and on up the flaming slopes of Cemetery

* Letter to Mrs. Lee, Oct. 19, 1863. Fitzhugh Lee's "Lee," p. 317.

Ridge and Little Round Top, as in the consequences which were soon disclosed.

The North was enabled to recruit her armies by drafting all the men she needed, and her command of the sea gave her Europe as a recruiting ground. On October 17, 1863, the President of the United States ordered a draft for 300,000 men. On February 1, 1864, he called for 500,000, allowing a deduction for quotas filled under the preceding draft; and on March 14, 1864, he issued an additional call for 200,000 more, "to provide an additional reserve for all contingencies." *

The South was almost spent. Her spirit was unquenched, and was, indeed, unquenchable; but her resources both of treasure and men were well-nigh exhausted. Her levies for reserves of all men between fifteen and sixty drew from President Davis the lament that she was grinding the seed-corn of the Confederacy. Yet more significantly it satisfied the new General, who, with his laurels fresh from the dearly won heights

* Under the first call 369,380 men were drawn, of whom 52,288 paid commutation; under the second 259,575 men were drawn, of whom 32,678 paid commutation. Again on July 18, 1864, a call was made for 500,000 more men, of whom 385,163 were furnished; and on December 19, 1864, 300,000 more were called for and 211,755 were furnished.—Rhodes's "History," Vol. IV, p. 429, citing "Statistical Rec. Phisterer," pp. 6, 8, 9.

of Missionary Ridge, succeeded (on March 12,) the high-minded Meade, in the command of the Union Army on the Potomac, that a policy of attrition was one, and possibly the only one, which must win in the end. Clear-headed, aggressive, and able, he began his campaign with this policy from which he never varied, though the attrition wore away two men in his own ranks for every one in Lee's army, and he found himself forced to abandon the line which he somewhat boastfully declared he would fight it out on if it took all summer.

Grant, acting on his policy of "persistent hammering" (a phrase coined by him after the events which proved its effectiveness), and assured of vast levies and of a free hand to carry out his plan on his own line, no matter what the cost, crossed the Rapidan on the night of the 3d of May, 1864. His army numbered over 140,000 men of all arms—double the number that Lee commanded—and he had 318 field guns. His equipment was possibly the best that any army could boast that ever took the field. His baggage train would, as he states, have stretched in line to Richmond, sixty odd miles away.

CHAPTER XII

THE WILDERNESS CAMPAIGN

IF Grant had harbored any delusion that Lee was a general strong only in defensive operations, he had reason quickly to be undeceived. Lee, who for reasons of his own, had permitted him to cross the river unopposed, waited until he had reached the tangles of the Wilderness, where his superiority in men and arms might prove less preponderant, and two days later, having called in his widely separated divisions, —separated for the want of subsistence—though he was outnumbered two to one * he threw himself upon him, inflicting upon him losses before which any other general who had yet commanded the Army of the Potomac would have recrossed the river, and even Grant recoiled. For two days (the 5th and 6th) the battle raged, and Lee forced Grant, with losses of 17,666 men,† from his direct line of march and led him

* Rhodes's "History of The United States," IV, p. 480. Humphrey's Va. Campaign of '64 and '65, p. 17.

† The Century Co.'s "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," IV, p. 182.

to call on his Government for reinforcements. "Send to Belle Plain," he wrote on the 10th, "all the infantry you can rake and scrape." And he needed them all. On the evening of the second day an attack similar to Jackson's at Chancellorsville was made on Grant's flank, and his left taken in reverse was driven back when an accident similar to that which changed the issue of that day changed this day's issue. As Longstreet, who commanded the advancing troops, rode down the plank-road accompanied by Generals Kershaw and Jenkins, a volley was poured into them by his own men, and Jenkins was killed and Longstreet dangerously wounded. It stopped the movement which otherwise might have forced Grant back across the Rapidan. Lee's forces were largely outnumbered, but to make good the difference Lee offered at more than one critical moment to lead them in person. Officers and men alike refused to advance while he remained at a point of danger, and he was forced to the rear. But not only in the battle of the 6th, but also in the battle of the 10th and in the furious fight at the "bloody angle," where, when his army was imperilled, he again rode forward to inspire his straining troops and was again driven by them to the rear, the fact that he had felt it necessary to place himself at their

head called forth new efforts from the jaded soldiers and stirred them to redoubled valor.

"These men, General," said Gordon, as he rode with him down the lines at Spottsylvania, where they rested for a moment prior to the final charge, "are the brave Virginians." Lee uttered no word. He simply removed his hat and passed bare-headed along the line. I had it from one who witnessed the act. "It was," said he, "the most eloquent address ever delivered." And a few minutes later as the men advanced to the charge, he heard a youth, as he ran forward crying and reloading his musket, shout through his tears that "any man who would not fight after what General Lee said was a —— coward."

In no battle of the war did Lee's genius shine forth more brightly than in the great battle of Spottsylvania Court House, where, after the bloody battle of the Wilderness, he divined Grant's plans, and again cutting him off from the object of his desire, threw himself upon him in a battle whose fury may be gauged by the fact that the musketry fire continued in one unbroken roar for seventeen hours, and large trees were shorn down by the musket balls.

By the evening of the 7th, while his staff were yet in darkness as to Grant's next move, Lee,

with his unerring sense of the soldier, had divined it, and he sent General Anderson with his division to relieve Stuart at Spottsylvania.* His adjutant-general, who was sent to apprise Stuart of the approach of the infantry, found him already engaged. The supports arrived just in time; for the cavalry had been driven back, and Grant already occupied the Court House, as he reported in his dispatch of the 8th. But Lee's promptness "deranged this part of the programme," driving him back and holding him off during a week's fierce fighting, when Grant, having lost 40,000 men, finding his enemy too obstinate and ready to die in the last ditch, drew off by the flank, toward the southward, whereupon Lee again headed him and facing him at Hanover Junction, forced him down the north bank of the Pamunkey to Hanover town.

"Before the lines of Spottsylvania," says Swinton, "the Army of the Potomac had for twelve days and nights engaged in a fierce wrestle in which it had done all that valor may do to carry a position by nature and art impregnable. In this contest, unparalleled in its continuous fury and swelling to the proportions of a campaign, language is inadequate to convey

* Taylor's "General Lee," p. 238.

an impression of the labors, fatigues and sufferings of those who fought by day, only to march by night from point to point of the long line, and renew the fight on the morrow. Above forty thousand men had already fallen in the bloody encounters of the Wilderness and Spottsylvania, and the exhausted army began to lose its spirits."

Such was the defence which Lee presented to his able antagonist, and his great army, after the exhaustion of the hungry winter of 'sixty-four. Had he not been ill and half delirious in his ambulance when Grant attempted to cross the North Anna and failed to get his centre over after his two wings were across, Grant's star might have set on the banks of the North Anna instead of rising to its zenith at Appomattox. But Lee was suddenly stricken down, and while he was murmuring in his semi-delirium, "We must strike them—we must never let them pass us again," Grant, after the most anxious night of the war, drew back his wings and slowly moved down the Pamunkey to find Lee still across his path at the historic levels of Cold Harbor, where valor and constancy rose to their highest point.

"I stood recently in the wood where Gregg's Texans put on immortality," wrote a Southern historian; "where Kershaw led three of his brigades in person to compensate them for the ab-

sence of the fourth."* It was this need to compensate their troops for want of reserves or equipment which so often led the generals of the Confederacy to the firing line. But it was a costly expedient. Four times, in what appeared the very hour of complete victory, the prize was stricken from the hand by the commander being shot from his saddle. First, when General Albert Sydney Johnston was slain at Shiloh, in the moment of victory. Next, when at Seven Pines Joseph E. Johnston was struck from his horse, and what might have proved a crushing defeat for McClellan was turned into an indecisive battle. Again, when Jackson was driving all before him at Chancellorsville, and fell like Wolff, victorious. And, finally, when in the Wilderness Longstreet was wounded and incapacitated at the critical moment when victory hovered over his arms.

It is related that on one occasion, Lee, being asked by his staff to leave during a battle one spot after another where he had posted himself, finally exclaimed, "I wish I knew where my place is on the battlefield. Wherever I go some one tells me it is not the place for me."

In fact, so far from Lee being chiefly good in

* Leigh Robinson's Address on the Wilderness Campaign, Memorial Volume: Army of Northern Virginia.

defence, the quality of his military spirit appears to one who studies his career to have been distinctly aggressive, possibly even too aggressive. No captain ever knew better the value of a quarter of an hour or the importance of striking first when the enemy was preparing to deliver his blow. In truth, he was an ardent fighter, and possessed in an extraordinary degree the qualities of both physical and moral courage. Lee's personal daring was the talk of his army. "I hear on all sides of your exposing yourself," wrote one of his sons during the Wilderness campaign, urging him to be more careful for the sake of the cause. And again and again, at some moment of supreme crisis, as at the "bloody angle" at Spottsylvania, which Grant had seized and where he was massing his picked troops to the number of 50,000, he rode forward to put himself at the head of his exhausted troops to lead them in a charge on which hung the fate of his army. Yet, as Henderson says in discussing Lee's audacity in attacking with an inferior force McClellan's well-equipped army, secure in their entrenchments, "he was no hare-brained leader, but a profound thinker, following the highest principles of the military art." That this will be the final verdict of History there can be little doubt.

After crossing the Rapidan the advance of Grant by the flank was under almost continuous attack by Lee. "Measured by casualties," says Rhodes, in his history of this campaign, "the advantage was with the Confederates." This far from expresses the real fact that Grant received a drubbing which, as Lee's Adjutant-General, Colonel Walter H. Taylor, said the next day in his note-book, would have sent any other general who had hitherto commanded the Union Army back in haste across the river. It was Grant's fortitude which saved him, and led him to tell General James H. Wilson that he would fight again. As Lee had assaulted at the Wilderness, so again at Spottsylvania he barred the way of his indomitable antagonist, and again and again forced the fighting, until, after holding him at the North Anna, where he offered battle, he had wedged Grant from his direct march on Richmond and forced him down the left bank of the Pamunkey, to end his direct march on Richmond at last on the doubly bloody field of Cold Harbor, the only battle which Grant declared afterward he would not have fought over again under the same circumstances.

Foiled in that campaign of his immediate object, and having lost more men than Lee had

at any time in his entire army, Grant adopted a new line of attack, and secretly crossing to the south side of the James, which he might at any time have reached by water without the loss of a man, attempted to seize Petersburg, as McClellan had planned to do, by a coup, but, failing in his object, began to lay siege to that place with a view to cutting off Richmond from the South, a feat which he only accomplished after eight months' fighting, in which he lost over 60,000 more men.

CHAPTER XIII

LEE AND GRANT

NECESSARILY a comparison arises between the two captains who confronted each other in this great campaign of 1864.

Grant's fame, when he was made lieutenant-general and came into Virginia, rested on the three great feats of Donelson, Vicksburg and Missionary Ridge. And to these three a fourth was added a year later, when at Appomattox, Lee, on the 9th of April, 1865, surrendered to him the starving remnant of the Army of Northern Virginia, which the exigencies of the Confederacy had held before Petersburg as in a vise till it had slowly perished. Current history has chosen to assign to Grant the greater praise for this last campaign, partly because he finally crushed Lee, but chiefly because it ended the war. And possibly the lasting fame of the successful captain will be based chiefly on this. It may be well, however, to recall the simple, but often overlooked, principle, that while success is without doubt the gauge of a general's ability,

this does not necessarily mean final success. History shines with the names of generals who have failed at last and have yet borne off the palm in the great contest in which Fame is the reward. Hannibal was not the less the superior of Scipio Africanus because the latter finally conquered him and saved Rome. Charles XII. was not the less a greater captain than Peter's forgotten general because the latter drove him from Russia to seek an asylum in Turkey. Nor was Napoleon inferior to Wellington though he died defeated and a prisoner, while Wellington became prime minister and first citizen of the England he had been so capable and fortunate as to save.

A captain's rank must be measured by his opportunities and the manner in which he uses them. That Grant was a general of rare ability, clear-headed, capable, far-sighted, single-minded, prompt, resourceful, resolute even to obstinacy, no one who studies his campaigns will deny; that he was the equal of Lee in that high combination of these and other qualities which go to make up the greatest soldier, no one who studies with open mind the campaign of 1864 may successfully affirm.

The heroic manner in which Lee with his half-starved veterans sustained the repeated

shocks of the "persistent hammering" of Grant's great army through so long a period must ever be a cause of wonder to the true student of history, and the key will only be found by him who, looking beyond mere natural forces, shall consider the power that, springing from love of country, animates the breast of those who, firm in their conviction of right, fight on their own soil for their homes and their firesides. Study of the subject has, at least, convinced one writer, who has desired to give the truth and nothing but the truth, that never has there been such an army led by such a leader. Grant's persistent hammering, as attritive as it was, was far less so than the attrition of hunger and want. Lee, who early in the war had sighed for a force of veteran troops to whom to confide the trust, had long been at the head of the most experienced veterans who ever fought on American soil. He believed in his soul that they would go anywhere where properly led. But he was too clear-eyed a soldier not to know that the most veteran legions that ever followed the eagles of Rome or France or the flag of the Confederacy must be shod and fed or they could not fight. From the first there had been difficulty in the equipment of the troops, owing to the absence of manufactories of even elementary articles.

The arms were largely of the oldest and most obsolete kind; and many troops were armed with old muskets roughly changed from flint-locks to percussion; saddles were wanting to the cavalry, and swords were made on country forges.* Artillery had to be mounted on farm wagons; † and uniforms were woven on country looms. This deficiency was in time partially overcome by captures from the enemy, and by blockade-running; but the matter of subsistence of the army was one which always caused grave alarm and serious and, at last, fatal trouble. The means of transportation were so limited that any break in even one line of railway was a perilous loss and the absence of manufactories contributed to frustrate Lee's boldest designs.

In October, 1863, after Gettysburg, Lee writes of his troops: "If they had been properly provided with clothes I would certainly have endeavored to have thrown them north of the Potomac; but thousands were barefooted; thousands with fragments of shoes, and all without coats, blankets or warm clothing. I could not bear to expose them to certain suffering on an uncertain issue." ‡

* "Life of Forrest," by Dr. John A. Wyeth.
† "Life of General Wm. N. Pendleton," by S. P. Lee.
‡ Letter to Mrs. Lee, October 19, 1863.

Again on October 28th he writes to his wife: "I am glad you have some socks for the Army. Send them to me. Tell the girls to send all they can. I wish they could make some shoes, too. We have thousands of barefooted men. There is no news. General Meade, I believe, is repairing the railroads and I presume will come on again. If I could only get some shoes and clothes for the men I would save him the trouble."

In the preceding winter, lying before Fredericksburg, he writes that his army is suffering so that he "may have to yield to a stronger force than General Burnside."

Could anything be more tragic than this general bound in his trenches by the nakedness of his army, while his opponent prepared to overwhelm him! Or could anything be more pathetic than this general of an army acting as receiver of a few dozen pairs of socks knitted for his barefooted army by his invalid wife! Not merely here, but from now on he acts as dispenser of the socks knitted by her busy needles. Truly, the South may well point with pride to her gifted son, who in his head-quarters in a "nice pine thicket," showed such antique simplicity of character.

An historian of the Wilderness campaign, in

a remarkable study of that campaign, has called attention to an unconsciously pathetic phrase used by Lee in relation to his cavalry: Now that "the grass is springing," he says he hopes to be able to use his cavalry effectively.*

By the beginning of the year 1864, the subsistence of the army had become almost impossible. "Many of the infantry," writes General Lee in an official communication, "are without shoes, and the cavalry worn down by the pursuit of Averill. We are now issuing to the troops a fourth of a pound of salt meat, and have only three days' supply at that rate. Two droves of cattle from the West that were reported to be for this army, I am told have been directed to Richmond. I can learn of no supply of meat on the road to the army, and fear I shall be unable to retain it in the field." †

In another official letter to the Commissary-General, he writes: "I regret very much to learn that the supply of beef for the army is so nearly exhausted. . . . No beef has been issued to the cavalry corps by the chief commissary that I am aware of for eighteen months. During that time it has supplied itself, and has now,

* Leigh Robinson in the Memorial Volume of the Army of Northern Virginia.

† Letter to President Davis, January 2, 1864.

I understand, sufficient to last until the middle of February." *

Two weeks later he writes the Quartermaster-General as follows: "General: The want of shoes and blankets in this army continues to cause much suffering and to impair its efficiency. In one regiment I am informed there are only fifty men with serviceable shoes, and a brigade that recently went on picket was compelled to leave several hundred men in camp that were unable to bear the exposure of duty, being destitute of shoes and blankets." †

He thereupon urges that instead of trusting to the precarious supplies procured by running the blockade, the South should spare no efforts to develop her own resources.

But the time had passed when the South could develop her resources, and it was soon to come when even the precarious supply by blockade-running was to cease altogether.

On the 24th of January he wrote his wife: " . . . I have had to disperse the cavalry as much as possible to obtain forage for their horses, and it is that which causes trouble. Provisions for the men, too, are very scarce, and

* Letter to Colonel L. B. Northrop, Commissary-General, January 5, 1864.

† Letter to Brigadier-General R. A. Lawton, Quartermaster General, January 18, 1864.

with very light diet and light clothing I fear they suffer. But still they are cheerful and uncomplaining. I received a report from one division the other day in which it stated that over four hundred men were barefooted and over one thousand without blankets. . . ."

Such was the condition of the army in the depth of the winter of 1863–1864, and it steadily grew worse. By the opening of spring Lee stood face to face with the gravest problem that can confront a general, the impossibility of subsisting his army, and moreover his own strength was waning, although he was yet to put forth the supreme effort which was to make his defence of Virginia against Grant possibly the greatest defensive campaign in history. In a letter to his eldest son, expressing his hearty acquiescence in an order substituting a chief engineer in place of his son for whom he had applied, wishing to make him chief of staff, he says: "I thought that position presented less objections to your serving with me than any other. . . . I want all the aid I can get, now. I feel a marked change in my strength since my attack last spring at Fredericksburg, and am less competent for my duty than ever." *

All through the spring, with undimmed

* Letter of April 6, 1864.

vision, he had foreseen the tragic fate awaiting him, and his letters show plainly how clear this vision was, yet never once does he show aught but the same heroic constancy which had distinguished him in the past. "In none of them," says Long, "does he show a symptom of despair, or breathe a thought of giving up the contest. To the last, he remained full of resources, energetic and defiant, and ready to bear on his own shoulders the whole burden of the conduct of the war." *

In March, when lying opposite Grant's great army on the Rapidan, he wrote the President of the indication that Grant was concentrating a great force to operate in Virginia. And on April 6th, he writes of the great efforts that, according to all the information he received, were to be made in Virginia. A week later he writes him again:

HEAD-QUARTERS, *April* 12, 1864.

MR. PRESIDENT: My anxiety on the subject of provisions for the Army is so great that I cannot refrain from expressing it to your Excellency. I cannot see how we can operate with our present supplies. Any derangement in their arrival, or disaster to the Railroad, would render it im-

* Long's "Lee."

possible for me to keep the Army together, and might force a retreat into North Carolina. There is nothing to be had in this section for men or animals. We have rations for the troops to-day and to-morrow. . . . Every exertion should be made to supply the depots at Richmond and at other points. . . . I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. Lee, *General.*

Three weeks later in a letter stating the movements of Grant's troops along the Rappahannock, and the signs of "large preparations on the part of the enemy and a state of readiness for action," he adds, "If I could get back Pickett, Hoke and B. R. Johnson, I would feel strong enough to operate. . . . I cannot get the troops together for want of forage and am looking for grass." It was a tragic situation. Three days later, on the night of May 3, 1864, Grant crossed the Rapidan with an army of over 140,000 men, many of them veteran troops, as brave men as ever carried a musket—armed and equipped in a manner unsurpassed, if equalled, in the annals of war, officered by the flower of the North. He had also 318 guns and a wagon-train that, stretched in a line, would have reached to

Richmond.* He controlled, with the aid of the exceedingly efficient navy, the York and the James to Dutch Gap, where Butler lay with an army which could spare him 10,000 men, to help in the deadly assaults at Cold Harbor, and a few days later could carry the formidable outer defences of Petersburg.

To meet this force, Lee had 62,000 men and but 224 guns. His army was less efficiently armed and with an equipment which would have been hopelessly insufficient for any other army than the one he commanded: the war-worn veterans of the Army of Northern Virginia, inured to hunger and hardship and battle.

On the 12th day of June, when Grant crossed the James to the south side, of the 140,000 men who had crossed the Rapidan one month and nine days before he had lost 60,000 men, almost as many men as Lee had had during the campaign. On the 9th of April following, when Lee surrendered, Grant's losses had mounted up to 124,000, two men for every man that Lee had in his army at any time. By this record judge the two captains.

* "The Army immediately opposed to Lee numbered, when it crossed the Rapidan, on May 4th, 1864, 149,166 men. While Lee had within call 62,000, but with only half that number he moved on and attacked Grant's army in the Wilderness." Jones's "Life and Letters of R. E. Lee," p. 310.

The adverse criticism of Grant as a captain of the first rank is based on the charge that he sacrificed over 50,000 men to reach the James, when he might have reached the south side of James River and laid siege to Petersburg and Richmond without the loss of a man.* As to whether, had he done this, he could have succeeded in the destruction of Lee's army, the impregnable defence of the Confederate Capital, can never be known. It was necessary for him not only to defeat Lee, but at the same time protect Washington, failure to do which had cost McClellan his place. His policy of "persistent hammering," no matter what the cost, won out in the end; for while the attrition wore away the thin gray line, which, stretched from Richmond to Petersburg, ever grew thinner, the drafts for the ranks of the Union ever grew larger.

No one knew so well as Lee the disastrous consequences of this policy of attrition. From August on his letters express plainly his recog-

* Grant's losses, from May 4th, when he crossed the Rapidan, to June 12th, when staggering back from Cold Harbor he abandoned his first plan of attack and crossed to the south side of the James, was, according to the Union authorities, 54,929. (Rhodes's "History," Vol. IV, p. 447. The Century Co.'s "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," Vol. IV, p. 182.) And among these were the flower of his army, as gallant officers and men as ever faced death on a battlefield.

nition of the terrible fact that his army was wearing down without the hope of his losses being repaired.* His soldierly prevision enabled him to predict precisely what afterward occurred: the extension of Grant's lines to envelop him, and the consequent loss of Richmond. †

Applause has been accorded Grant because he slipped away from Lee and crossed to the south side of the James without molestation. It was a capital piece of work. In truth, however, he failed absolutely in the immediate object of this movement: the securing, as he wrote Halleck, of the city of Petersburg, by a coup before the Confederates could get there in much force. ‡

The design of Grant to capture Petersburg, and by cutting off Richmond from the South force the capitulation of the Confederate Capital, was undoubtedly able strategy and why it had not been attempted by him before seems even now somewhat singular, for McClellan had urged it in July 1862, and a dash had been made to seize Richmond from this side by a daring raid which, possibly, had failed only because of a rise in James River which prevented the raiding party

*Letter to Secretary of War, August 23, 1864. Letter to President Davis, September 2d, 1864.

†Letter of October 10, 1864, W. R., 1144.

‡Official Records, Vol. XI, pp. 1, 12.

from crossing; and the mouth of the Appomattox was as securely in the hands of the Union as the mouth of the Delaware.

Grant's plan to seize Petersburg with its slender garrison of less than 2,500 men was, however, foiled by Beauregard, to whom on his urgent request Lee sent men from the north side of the James, and though Grant was enabled to seize on June 15th "the formidable works to the north-east of the town," when he attacked in force on three successive days he was repulsed with the loss of 10,000 men, losses which shook and disheartened his army even more, possibly, than the slaughter at Cold Harbor.

The demoralization consequent on Lee's victories from the Wilderness to Petersburg, over "the crippled Army of the Potomac," which now enabled him to detach Early and, with a view to repeating the strategy of 1862, send him to the Valley of Virginia, followed by that general's signal success, in conjunction with Breckinridge, in clearing the valley of Sigel and Hunter, and, after defeating Wallace at Monocacy Bridge, in immediately threatening Washington itself, sent gold up to 285, the highest point it reached during the war.*

* Rhodes's "History of the United States," IV, p. 509.

The authorities in Washington, more alarmed even than when Lee was at Sharpsburg or at Chambersburg, were clamoring for Grant to come and assume personal command of the forces protecting the city. And it is charged that Grant escaped the fate of his predecessors only because there was no one else to put in his place. It was even charged that he had fallen "back into his old habits of intemperance," a charge which Mr. Lincoln dryly dismissed with a witticism.*

Congress, by resolution, requested the President "to appoint a day for humiliation and prayer," and the President, "cordially concurring . . . in the pious sentiments expressed" in this resolution, appointed the first Thursday in August as a day of national humiliation and prayer

The simple truth is that, against great outside clamor, Grant was sustained by the authorities in Washington because he was mani-

* "Despondency and discouragement," says Rhodes, the latest and among the most thoughtful of all the Northern historians of the war, 'are words which portray the state of feeling at the North during the month of July, and the closer one's knowledge of affairs, the gloomier was his view; but the salient facts put into every one's mind the pertinent question, 'Who shall revive the withered hopes that bloomed on the opening of Grant's campaign?'" This question he quotes from the New York *World*, a paper which he states was not unfriendly to Grant. "History of the United States," IV, p. 507.

festly the best general in sight, and not because he had proved himself the equal of Lee.

So great was the feeling of despondency at the North at this time that several serious, if somewhat informal, embassies were sent by the authorities at Washington to ascertain the feeling of the Confederate authorities touching peace on the basis of a restoration of the Union, coupled at first with a condition of "an abandonment of slavery," but later without even this condition.

On the very day that Mr. Davis, yielding to clamor at the South against the Fabian policy of the cautious Johnston, who had been falling back before Sherman, relieved that veteran officer of his command, he accorded an interview to two gentlemen, who had come on an irregular mission, with the knowledge and consent of Mr. Lincoln, to ask whether any measure could be tried that might lead to peace. Mr. Davis rejected the proposal to make peace, unless with it came the acknowledgment of the right of the South to self-government; "and," declares the historian above quoted, "taking into account the actual military situation, a different attitude on the part of the Richmond Government could not have been expected."*

*Rhodes's "History of the United States," IV, pp. 514–516.

In truth, it was not until long afterward, and after it was found that the resources of the South were exhausted, that Grant's costly policy of attrition was accepted by the Government or the people, and his star which had been waning once more ascended. That it ever ascended again was due in part to his constancy of purpose, and for the rest, to successes elsewhere and to the exhaustion of the South: particularly to the destruction of the means of communication.

Viewed in the cold light of the inexorable facts, the honors at this time were all with the Confederate general, and later comparisons so fulsome to Grant and so invidious to Lee have all been made in the light of subsequent events, over which neither Grant nor Lee exercised control.

Early failed to seize the golden moment which presented itself on July 11th and take Washington, if indeed, it was ever possible to take it. On July 17th, the day Sherman crossed the Chattahoochee and began his direct march on Atlanta, Johnston was relieved from the command of the Southern Army, in obedience to popular clamor, at the moment when, if his strategy had not prepared the way for the possible destruction of the invading force, the veteran general was, at least, preparing to carry

out the consistent plan he had laid down from the beginning. His army was placed under the command of the daring but rash Hood, who, reversing Johnston's plan, and assuming the offensive, was speedily defeated, thus leaving Sherman free to devastate the South and close the last Southern port through which outside supplies could be secured.

No step could have given more aid and comfort to the North, or have been more disastrous to the South, than the removal of Johnston. Abroad it satisfied the anxious nations of Europe that the South was at her last gasp and established their hitherto vacillating policy in favor of the Union cause, and the Southern cause thereafter steadily declined to its end.

The same day that the President of the Confederate States removed Joseph E. Johnston, the President of the United States, appalled at the effect of Lee's masterly defence of Richmond, issued a proclamation calling for 500,000 men, and before Grant learned of this call he wrote urging a draft of 300,000 immediately.*

Meantime, Europe had changed front. The skilful diplomacy of Charles Francis Adams had prevented the delivery to the Confederacy of the rams which had been built for her; the sym-

*Rhodes's "History of the United States," IV, pp. 506–507.

pathies of the European nations had changed, and the South was, as has been well said by the son and namesake of the able diplomat referred to, as securely shut up to perish as if she had been in a vast vacuum. The victories of diplomacy are little considered beside those of the battlefield. But, taking into consideration what the *Merrimac* had accomplished during her brief but formidable cruise in Hampton Roads, where she sank the *Cumberland*, captured the *Congress's* crew and drove the famous *Monitor* into shoal water, it is probable that the blockade of the Southern ports might have been broken had not Mr. Adams's unremitting efforts availed to prevent the Confederate rams being delivered.

As it was, the end was clearly in view to Lee. The destruction of Hood's army at Nashville removed the only force capable of blocking the way of Sherman across the South, and left him free to march to the sea, and, having got in touch with the fleet there, continue through the Carolinas, marking his way with a track of devastation which has been likened to that made when Saxe carried fire and sword through the Palatinate.

Lee, with "Richmond hung like a millstone about his neck," a figure he is said to have em-

ployed, was forced to guard a line extending from the south of Petersburg to the north of Richmond, and to withstand with his thinning ranks his able antagonist with an ever-growing army and an ever-increasing confidence.

All that winter Lee lay in the trenches, while his army withered and perished from want and cold, and while Sherman, almost unopposed, burnt, in sheer riot of destruction, supplies that might, had they been available, have subsisted that army for ten years, and yet by the policy of the Confederate Government were left unprotected.

By the end of the year all available resources were exhausted.

On the 11th of January, 1865, Lee sent this dispatch to the Secretary of War: "Hon. J. A. Seddon, there is nothing within reach of this army to be impressed. The country is swept clear. Our only reliance is upon the railroads. We have but two days' supplies."

R. E. Lee.

A few weeks later he telegraphed again to the Secretary of War, under date of February 8, 1865.

Sir:

All the disposable force of the right wing of the army has been operating against the enemy

beyond Hatcher's Run since Sunday. Yesterday, the most inclement day of the winter, they had to be retained in line of battle, having been in the same condition the two previous days and nights. I regret to be obliged to state that under these circumstances, heightened by assaults and fire of the enemy, some of the men had been without meat for three days, and all were suffering from reduced rations and scant clothing, exposed to battle, cold, hail and sleet. I have directed Colonel Coler, Chief Commissary, who reports that he has not a pound of meat at his disposal, to visit Richmond and see if nothing can be done. If some change is not made and the Commissary Department reorganized, I apprehend dire results. The physical strength of the men, if their courage survives, must fail under such treatment. Our cavalry has to be dispersed for want of forage. Fitz Lee's and Lomax's divisions are scattered because supplies cannot be transported where their services are required. I had to bring Wm. H. F. Lee's division forty miles Sunday night to get him in position. Taking these facts in connection with the paucity of our numbers you must not be surprised if calamity befalls us. . . .

R. E. Lee,
General.

President Davis endorsed on this report: "This is too sad to be patiently considered and cannot have occurred without criminal neglect or gross incapacity. . . ." A comment, as true to-day as when Lee set before him plainly the tragic fact that his army was fast perishing at its post.

Unfortunately for the South, the rest of the President's endorsement, "Let supplies be had by purchase or borrowing or other possible mode," was inefficacious. There was no longer any possible mode by which supplies could be had. The South was exhausted, because Virginia had been swept clean and there were no means of transporting supplies from elsewhere.

The following day General Lee assumed the office of Commander-in-Chief of the military forces of the Confederate States to which he had been appointed on the 6th; but it was too late. He had already carried the fortunes of the Confederacy on his shoulders for, at least, two years longer than the Confederacy could have survived without his genius to sustain it; and now the time had come when no mortal power could longer support it. Its end had come. All had gone except the indomitable and immortal spirit of its people.

Grant's sagacious disposition of his forces,

together with his command of the Chesapeake and its great tributaries, enabled him to threaten at pleasure either of the two cities. With his pontoon bridge across the James, protected by his gunboats and veiled by his heavy entrenchments, he could at any time mass a sufficient number of troops on the north side of that river to cause grave anxiety and compel Lee to transfer a sufficient force from before Petersburg to withstand him. And, at the same time, he could still retain on the Appomattox a force superior to Lee's, prepared to assault Lee's depleted lines whenever a chance presented itself.

Yet, for nearly ten months after Grant's first attempt on Petersburg, Lee held him at bay. And even at the last he succumbed not so much to the attacks in his front, as to the failure of the Confederate Government to supply his troops with the necessaries of life—a failure, in its turn, due to the perishing or the destruction of all means of transportation. His reports to the President of the Confederate States during the winter set forth plainly the impossibility of maintaining his position unless subsistence should be furnished his troops. But subsistence could not be, or, at least, was not, furnished, and while the sword attacked in front, hunger assailed in the

rear. His men had, he wrote the War Department in February, endured all that flesh and blood could endure. In the battle-line suffering from cold and exhaustion, they had not had meat for three days. No wonder that his numbers dwindled and that his tardy elevation, in February, to the position of Commander-in-Chief was futile to recoup the destruction.

CHAPTER XIV

THE RETREAT TO APPOMATTOX

AS a sequel to these far-reaching conditions, the policy of attrition simply went on from month to month, until on the fatal 2d of April, Lee, who had only a few weeks before been made Commander-in-Chief, and almost whose first act had been the reinstatement of Johnston in his command, following an extension of Grant's lines around his flank, which broke his connection with the South and threatened to envelop him, announced to his Government that he could no longer maintain the long line from south of Petersburg to north of Richmond.

On the 29th of March, as he was preparing to evacuate Petersburg and start south to unite with Johnston and attack Sherman, Grant, who was apprehensive of such a movement, began to move around his right to foil it. To prevent this, Lee was forced to withdraw troops from other parts of his line, and Grant promptly proceeded to take advantage of this fact.

On the 1st of April, following a repulse on

the evening before in front of Lee's extreme right, Sheridan attacked and defeated at Five Forks Pickett, who had left a long gap of several miles defended only by pickets between his troops and the nearest line. And Grant, having carried Lee's outer defences, ordered a general assault for the next day. Lee, knowing the wasted condition of his army and the impossibility of holding against Grant's contemplated assault his long-stretched line, decided to execute at once, if possible, his plan to abandon the lines he had held for nearly ten months and move southward to effect a junction with Johnston. He notified the Government in Richmond, arranged for provisions to meet him at Amelia Court House, and that night executed with consummate skill the difficult feat of extricating his reduced army from its perilous position and started on a retreat southward.

His letters show his entire appreciation of the difficulty and peril of his situation; but there is not a trace of dismay in all his writing. Never more than now, when he made his last move in the great game of war, did the *mens equa in arduis*, that mark of noble minds, which ever distinguished him, shine forth in him.

His letter to his wife, on the eve of the movement which was to prove the closing act in the

great drama of the war, reflects his serenity amid the rising difficulties which were soon to engulf him. He thanks her for the socks she had knitted for his barefooted and suffering men; encloses for her a life of General Scott, for whom he had a word of old-time affection and esteem, and commends her to God.

That night he executed successfully the difficult movement to which he referred and withdrew his hungry troops from their long-held and historic entrenchments.

Some historians, who under the natural impulse to laud the commanders of the Union armies yet have instinctively felt that on the plain face of the records Lee had the honors as a soldier, have undertaken to assert that "the conditions were not unequal: that Lee might have withdrawn his army and effected a junction with Johnston, but was outgeneraled by Grant." To support this claim they assign to Lee the highest number of men that by any computation could possibly be assigned to him and take no account of the absent and the disabled.

The latest of these historians, and among the most broad-minded of the class, has assigned to Lee at the beginning of his retreat 49,000 men, against Grant's 113,000, and declares that with "the game escape or surrender

the conditions were not unequal, and Lee was simply outgeneraled." *

Conditions not unequal! When Grant, as commander of all the Northern armies, had nearly one million men under his command, and Lee, as commander of the Southern armies, had less than two hundred thousand under his command; and when Grant had a great navy to support and transport subsistence for his armies, and Lee had no navy and no means of transportation. If Lee was simply outgeneraled some change must have taken place in the two men, since, with an army never more than ten thousand in excess of the numbers assigned him here,† Lee fought through the month of May, 1864, Grant's army of 140,000, defeated him in battle after battle from the Wilderness to Petersburg, caused him losses of 124,000 men, and must have destroyed him but for his inexhaustible resources of men and munition.

But, by the records, the statement quoted is erroneous, and, laying aside the imperfect records of the Confederate Army, the evidence is beyond question that when Lee began his retreat he had only about half of the number of men assigned

* Rhodes's "History," Vol. V.

† In fact, the 49,000 was before the great losses at the end of February.

to him by these historians. Colonel Walter H. Taylor, of his staff, estimates that Lee had on March 31st 33,000 muskets, and General Lee told General Fitz Lee that he had at that time 35,000 men; "but after Five Forks and in the encounters of March 31st, April 1st and 2d, he had only 20,000 muskets available, and of all arms not over 25,000, when he began the retreat that terminated at Appomattox Court House."*

Whatever may be the numbers shown on records scatteringly made, and, at best, most imperfect, Lee's statement for those who know him settles the question.

But even these men were little more than spectres. Ill-fed, ill-clad, kept for ten months on a constant strain in the face of an army that might at any time mass treble their number on either flank; stretched in a line thirty-five miles in length, every point of which it was vital to hold; wasted by hunger, disease and cold, these veterans made no plea of being outnumbered. Under Lee they answered every demand and held Grant at bay until not only subsistence, but hope of subsistence, perished.

Then, as Grant, on the opening of spring, moved to overwhelm them and threatened Lee's line, Lee led them out, as he had already planned

* Fitzhugh Lee's "Life of Lee," p. 373.

to do should necessity arise and his Government permit. It was a delicate and perilous movement, and one that would have taxed the powers of the greatest general in history. For Grant, with his overwhelming army stretching south of him, lay close against him in a line thirty odd miles long which at many points was not a musket-shot away.

Lee having given Longstreet, who protected Richmond on the north, orders to cross and join him at a given point on the night of the 2d of April, withdrew his men from their trenches, crossed to the north of the Appomattox on the south bank of which rested Grant's left, and, marching up the north bank, recrossed to the south side beyond Grant's lines and directed his course for Amelia Court House, to which point he had ordered provisions to be sent to meet him. Had his orders been obeyed, it is the opinion of many competent critics that he might have eluded Grant's pursuit, prompt and efficient as it was. But no provisions were there. Some one had blundered. It appears that a provision-train had arrived on April 1st, but had been fatuously ordered to Richmond. However it was, a day was lost in the effort to obtain subsistence from the depleted countryside for his famished army, men and horses, and in the interval Grant was

enabled to come up, and thenceforth, in the light of subsequent events, further retreat was unavailing. From this moment it was merely a question of whether the endurance of his starving force would hold out to march and fight until he had outstripped Grant with his preponderant force possessed of ample subsistence and baggage trains. So great was the confidence of his men in Lee that many of them believed that the retreat was a movement designed by him to draw Grant from his base of supplies with a view to turning on him and destroying him.

Every step was in face of the enemy massing in force under the able direction of men like Meade, Ord and Sheridan. The fighting was almost hourly, and, while fortune varied, the balance of success was largely with the pursuing forces. At Sailor's Creek, Ewell's command was cut off and overwhelmed, as was Anderson's, with a loss together of nearly 6,000 men. Among the prisoners were six generals, Ewell, Custis Lee, Kershaw, Dubose, Corse and Hunton.

At Farmville, reached on the 6th, provisions were found and the men were served with rations for the first time since they left Petersburg; but for the most part they lived on such scanty fare as they could secure from the already

well-swept region which they passed. So denuded was the country of all that would sustain life, that men thought themselves well off when a corn-house was found with grain yet left in it and corn was distributed to them to be parched. Even this was not always to be had, and as corn was necessary for the artillery horses, guards were posted where they fed to prevent the men from taking it from the horses. They were reduced to the necessity of raking up the scattered grains from the ground where the horses had been fed and even to picking the grains from the droppings of the horses. Many of the men became too weak to carry their muskets. Small wonder that they dropped out of the ranks by hundreds. Yet still the remainder kept on, with unwavering courage, unwavering devotion and unwavering faith in their commander, and wherever a chance was presented they gave a good account of themselves.

In their rags and tatters, ill-clad, ill-shod, ill-fed, ill-armed, and, whenever armed, armed for the most part with the weapons they had captured from brave foes on hard-fought battle-fields, they were the abiding expression of Southern valor and fortitude; the flower of Southern manhood; the pick of every class; the crystallized residue of the Army of Northern

Virginia, with which Lee had achieved his fame and on which to future ages shall rest the fame of the South.

Like a wounded lion that spent and wasted army dragged itself across the desolated land; now turning at bay and at every turn leaving its deep mark on its pursuers, now retreating again without haste or fear, and simply in obedience to the instinct of self-preservation, and at the last, sinking with exhaustion, with crest unlowered, heart undaunted and face steadfastly set to the foe.

The spring rains had made the roads so deep in that region of deep roads as to be well-nigh impassable to the well-equipped troops of Grant, and operations, just before the evacuation of Richmond, had once to be suspended. To Lee's ill-fed teams they became at times actually impassable and batteries had to be abandoned because the exhausted horses could not longer pull the guns. In some cases the artillery-men armed themselves with muskets picked up on the march and were formed into infantry companies. But in face of Grant's capital generalship, using his great army to best advantage, attacking and capturing bodies of troops day after day, the end could no longer be doubtful. On the 7th, General Pendleton,

chief of Lee's reserve artillery, at the request of some of the high officers, approached the commander with the suggestion that their united voice was that the situation was hopeless, and that further fighting was useless. Lee, however, was more far-sighted. He had not yet abandoned hope and he replied that he had too many brave men to think of laying down his arms, and that they still fought with great spirit. Furthermore, if he should first intimate to Grant that he would listen to terms an unconditional surrender might be demanded. "And sooner than that," he added, "I am resolved to die."*

The end justified his determination. Grant, approaching in his pursuit the limit of what he thought a safe distance to place between his army and his base, the following day opened negotiations with Lee for the surrender of his army.

Long before, in writing to one of his brothers from Mexico where he contributed so much to the brilliant victories which ended in the capture of the Mexican capital, Lee had said, "We have the right, by the laws of war, of dictating the terms of peace and requiring indemnity for our losses and expenses. Rather than forego that right except, through a spirit of magnanimity for

* Fitzhugh Lee's "Life of Lee," p. 392.

a crushed foe, I would fight them ten years; but I would be generous in exercising it." *

Would it not be likely that this letter should recur to him in this crisis of his life?

In another letter he says, in referring to the terms of peace: "These are certainly not hard terms for Mexico, considering how the fortune of war has been against her. For myself, I would not exact more than I would have taken before the commencement of hostilities, as I should wish nothing but what was just." †

The continuous fighting held Lee back, and enabled Sheridan, followed by Ord, marching by a parallel route, to reach Appomattox Station before him and bar his further progress.

A proposal was made to Lee that the army should scatter and make its way to Johnston by various routes. This plan Lee promptly disposed of. He declared that he would go to General Grant and surrender himself, though he went alone, and take the consequences of his acts. ‡

On the 8th of April orders were issued for

* Letter to his brother, Sydney Smith Lee, March 4, 1848, cited in Jones's "Life and Letters of Lee," p. 57.

† (Letter cited in Jones's "Lee," p. 54.) John Russell Young once told the writer that Grant stated to him that he could not have kept up his pursuit a half day longer.

‡ "Military Memoirs of General E. P. Alexander," p. 605.

a last effort. The artillery was directed to be brought up during the night and massed with a view to breaking through Grant's forming lines, and steps were taken to deliver battle once more. All night the men toiled, but next morning the officer charged with the task* notified Gordon that his utmost efforts had been able to bring up only two batteries—the rest of the artillery had taken another route and could not be reached —the horses of the other batteries available were gone; the residue of that artillery which had once helped to make the artillery duels of Lee and Grant the fiercest in the records of war was silenced forever.

On this small fragment of his once redoubtable artillery, and on the remnant of his infantry and cavalry, one more call was made by Lee. As the sun rose on the morning of the 9th of April, the worn and wasted squadrons, with a response as prompt and generous as in the best days of his most victorious campaigns, advanced to their last charge to drive for the last time their foes before them. The first onset was successful. Sheridan's cavalry was driven back in confusion and the situation was possibly saved only, as the supporting general himself stated,

* Colonel Thomas H. Carter, a gallant and efficient soldier, and Lee's near kinsman.

by the timely arrival of Ord, the commander of the Army of the James, with abundant troops to bar the way.*

Lee, after his surrender, asked for 25,000 rations, and this is accepted as the number of his army. But the actual number of muskets surrendered on the 9th of April was less than 9,000. Lee had fought his army until it had simply worn away.

Whatever men Lee had on his rolls, whether ten thousand, twenty-five thousand or forty thousand, they were in their famished and spent condition too few to defeat Grant's ably led force, whether that force were 100,000 or 180,000, and Lee, acting in accord with the views of his general officers who had urged on him this course, at last decided to avail himself of Grant's generous proposal. He asked and received from him honorable terms for the surrender of whatever remained of the Army of Northern Virginia. A detached portion of the cavalry had broken through and started to make its way to Johnston, but Lee recalled the officer in command and informed him that he was included in his surrender.

* "Ord left Petersburg with 20,000 troops, all arms; Fifth Corps, 15,973 (Report of March 31, 1865); Sheridan's Cavalry, 13,810; to which add 1,000 for the Fifth Corps Artillery, makes 50,783." —Fitzhugh Lee's "Life of Lee," p. 388, note.

The greatness of the occasion appears to have lifted Grant to a higher plane than that of the mere soldier from which he had looked apparently unmoved on the sacrifice of thousands of the gallant men and officers who, from the Wilderness to Cold Harbor, had died at his bidding; and from which he had refused with cold calculation the offers of the South to exchange prisoners and had left men to die like sheep in prisons made noisome largely by their numbers.

In the long vigils before Petersburg, faced by a brave and steadfast foe, his mind had apparently been elevated as it mainly became in the presence of a great crisis—as it became years afterward when, clutched fast in the grip of his last and conquering foe, he held death at bay while he completed the remarkable work on which his family were to depend for their support. However this was, his generosity justified Lee's declaration that he would give his army as good terms as it had a right to expect, and his correspondence with Lee will bear comparison with that of any victor in history.*

*An incident of the surrender told by Grant to Dr. Fordyce Barker was related by him to Dr. Wm. M. Polk. Dr. Barker asked Grant how he felt when he met Lee at Appomattox. Was he not sensible of great elation over his achievement?

Grant replied that on the contrary he was sensible rather of humiliation. When he found Lee in full-dress uniform while he

Ten days after Lee's surrender, Sherman, moved thereto by a more generous impulse than had hitherto appeared to inspire him, and plainly influenced by Grant's magnanimity, offered to Johnston terms even more generous, if possible, than Grant had proposed to Lee, and after a brief period of negotiation in which Sherman's far-sighted views were scornfully disavowed and rejected by the authorities in Washington, just unbridled by the tragic death of Lincoln, Johnston surrendered on the same terms that Lee had accepted.

In this convention all the remaining forces of the South were included, and, in so far as the South could effect it, the war was over. The

himself was in a simple fatigue-suit: a private's blouse with only a general's shoulder-straps to denote his rank, and with his boots spattered to their tops, he was afraid that Lee might imagine that he intended a discourtesy to him because of an incident that had occurred in Mexico. General Scott, he said, was exceedingly particular as to all matters of etiquette, and had given orders that no officer should appear at head-quarters without being in full-dress. On some occasion thereafter Grant had gone to head-quarters in an ordinary fatigue-uniform and that not as neat, perhaps, as it should have been, and had reported to Lee, who was at the time serving on Scott's staff. After the business had been transacted, Lee said, "I feel it my duty, Captain, to call your attention to General Scott's order that an officer reporting at head-quarters should be in full uniform."

This incident, said the general, suddenly flashed across his mind and made him uncomfortable lest General Lee should recall it also, and imagine that he intended to affront him.

war, however, practically ended when Lee surrendered his army at Appomattox.

The highest tribute to this army is the simple fact that with its surrender the war was over. The fortunes of the Confederacy had been nailed to its tattered standards and with them went down.

CHAPTER XV

LEE IN DEFEAT

AND now, having adverted thus hastily to those glorious campaigns which must, to the future student of military skill, place Lee among the first captains of history, I shall not invite attention further to Lee the soldier—not to Lee the victorious general of the Seven Days' fights; of Second Manassas; of Fredericksburg; of Chancellorsville; of the Wilderness; of Spottsylvania Court House; of Cold Harbor—not to Lee the Strategist, who relieved Richmond in three campaigns. Not to Lee the Victorious, shall I ask further attention; but to a greater Lee—to Lee the Defeated.

As glorious as were these campaigns, it is on the last act of the drama, the retreat from Petersburg, the surrender at Appomattox and the dark period that followed that surrender, that we must look to see him at his best. His every act, his every word, showed how completely he had surrendered himself to Duty; and with

what implicit obedience he followed the command of that

"Stern daughter of the voice of God."

"Are you sanguine of the result of the war?" asked Bishop Wilmer of him in the closing days of the struggle. His reply was:

"At present I am not concerned with results. God's will ought to be our aim, and I am quite contented that His designs should be accomplished and not mine."

On that last morning when his handful of worn and starving veterans had made their last charge, to find themselves shut in by ranks of serried steel; hemmed in by Grant's entire army; he faced the decree of Fate with as much constancy as though that decree were Success, not Doom.

"What will history say of the surrender of an army in the field?" asked an officer of his staff in passionate grief.

"Yes, I know they will say hard things of us; they will not understand that we were overwhelmed by numbers; but that is not the question, Colonel. The question is, is it right to surrender this army? If it is right, then I will take all of the responsibility."

It was ever the note of duty that he sounded.

"You will take with you," he said to his army in his farewell address, "the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed; and I earnestly pray that a merciful God will extend to you His blessing and protection. With an unceasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your country and a grateful remembrance of your kind and generous consideration of myself, I bid you an affectionate farewell."

"We are conscious that we have humbly tried to do our duty," he said, a year or more after the war, when the clouds hung heavy over the South; "we may, therefore, with calm satisfaction trust in God and leave results to Him."

The sun, which has shone in the morning, but has become obscured by clouds in the afternoon, sometimes breaks forth, and at its setting shines with a greater splendor than it knew even at high noon.

So here. Sheathing his stainless sword, surrendering in the field the remnant of an army that had once been the most redoubtable body of fighting men of the century, the greatest captain, the noblest gentleman of our time, expecting to slip into the darkness of oblivion, suddenly stepped forth from the gloom of defeat into the splendor of perpetual fame.

I love to think of Grant as he appeared that April day at the surrender: the simple soldier, the strenuous fighter, who, though thrashed, was always ready to fight again; who, now though he had achieved the prize for which he had fought so hard and had paid so dearly, was so modest, and so unassuming, that but for his shoulder-straps and that yet better mark of rank, his generosity, he might not have been known as the victor. Southerners generally have long forgiven Grant all else for the magnanimity that he showed that day to Lee. By his orders no salutes of joy were fired, no public marks of exultation over his fallen foe were allowed. History contains no finer example of greatness. Not Alexander in his generous youth excelled him.

Yet, it is not more to the victor that posterity will turn her gaze than to the vanquished, her admiration at the glory of the conqueror well-nigh lost in amazement at the dignity of the conquered.

Men who saw the defeated general when he came forth from the chamber where he had signed the articles of capitulation say that he paused a moment as his eyes rested once more on the Virginia hills; smote his hands together as though in some excess of inward agony, then

mounted his gray horse, Traveller, and rode calmly away.

If that was the very Gethsemane of his trials, yet he must have had then one moment of supreme, if chastened, joy. As he rode quietly down the lane leading from the scene of capitulation, he passed into view of his men—of such as remained of them. The news of the surrender had got abroad and they were waiting, grief-stricken and dejected upon the hillsides, when they caught sight of their old commander on the gray horse. Then occurred one of the most notable scenes in the history of war. In an instant they were about him, bare-headed, with tear-wet faces; thronging him, kissing his hand, his boots, his saddle; weeping; cheering him amid their tears; shouting his name to the very skies. He said, "Men, we have fought through the war together; I have done my best for you; my heart is too full to say more."

Thus, with kindly words, as of a father, and a heart that must have felt some solace in such devotion, he bade them farewell, and left them like the devoted band that wept for the great Apostle to the Gentiles, weeping most of all that they should see his face no more.

The cheers were heard afar off over the hills where the victorious army lay encamped, and

awakened some anxiety. It was a sound they well knew:

> "The voice once heard through Shiloh's woods,
> And Chickamauga's solitudes,
> The fierce South cheering on her sons."

It was reported in some of the Northern papers that it was the sound of jubilation at the surrender. But no! Some of those who are still here know what it was; for they were there. It was the voice of jubilation, yet not for surrender: but for the captain who had surrendered their muskets, but was still the commander of their hearts.

This is Lee's final victory and the highest tribute to the South: that the devotion of the South to him was greater in the hour of defeat than in that of victory. It is said that Napoleon was adored by the men of France; but hated by the women. It was not so with Lee. No victor ever came home to receive more signal evidences of devotion than this defeated general.

Richmond was in mourning. Since the Union army had entered her gates, every house had been closed as though it were the house of death. One afternoon, a few days after the surrender, Lee, on his gray horse, Traveller, attended by two or three officers, crossed the

James and rode quietly up the street to his home on Franklin Street, where he dismounted. That evening it was noised abroad that General Lee had arrived; he had been seen to enter his house. Next morning the houses were open as usual; life began to flow in its accustomed channels. Those who were there have said that when General Lee returned they felt as safe as if he had had his whole army at his back.

His first recorded words on his arrival were a tribute to his successful opponent. "General Grant has acted with magnanimity," he said to some who spoke of the victor with bitterness. It was the keynote to his after life.

Over forty years have gone by since that day in April when Lee, to avoid further useless sacrifice of life, surrendered himself and all that remained of the Army of Northern Virginia and gave his parole d'honneur to bear arms no more against the United States. To him, who with prescient mind had long borne in his bosom knowledge of the exhausted resources of the Confederacy, and had seen his redoubtable army, under the "policy of attrition," dwindle away to a mere ghost of its former self, it might well appear that he had failed, and, if he ever thought of his personal reputation, that he had lost the soldier's dearest prize; that Fame had

turned her back and Fate usurped her place. Thenceforth, he who had been the leader of armies; whose glorious achievements had filled the world; who had been the prop of a high-hearted nation's hope, was to walk the narrow byway of private life, defeated, impoverished and possibly misunderstood.

But to us who have survived for the space of more than a generation, how different it appears. We know that Time, the redresser of wrongs, is steadily righting the act of unkind Fate; and Fame, firmly established in her high seat, is ever placing a richer laurel on his brow.

Yea, ride away, thou defeated general! Ride through the broken fragments of thy shattered army, ride through thy war-wasted land, amid thy desolate and stricken people. But know that thou art riding on Fame's highest way:

"This day shall see
Thy head wear sunlight and thy feet touch stars."

CHAPTER XVI

AFTER THE WAR

THE sternest test of Lee's character was yet to come. Only those who went through it can know the depth of the humiliation in which, during the next few years, malignity, with Ignorance for ally, strove to steep the South.

Out of it Lee came without a trace of rancor or of bitterness. In all the annals of our race no man has ever shown a nobler or more Christian spirit.

Lincoln, who was of Southern blood and whose passion was a reunited Union, was in his grave, slain by a madman, and after life's fitful fever was sleeping well, his last message being one of peace and good-will. His successor began by flinging himself into the arms of those who had hated Lincoln most.

On the 29th of May, President Johnson issued a proclamation of amnesty, but General Lee, with all others of rank, was excluded from its operation, and he was indicted for treason,

by a grand jury, composed partly of negroes, especially selected for the purpose of returning indictments against him and Mr. Davis. There were those who stood proudly aloof and gave no sign of desiring reinstatement as citizens. Some scornfully declared their resolution to live and die without accepting parole. Not so the broad-minded and wise Lee. He immediately wrote (on June 13th) to the President applying for the "benefits and full restoration of all rights and privileges extended to those included in the terms of the proclamation." This application he inclosed on the same day in a letter to General Grant informing him that he was ready to meet any charges that might be preferred against him and did not wish to avoid trial, but that he had supposed that the officers and men of the army of Northern Virginia were by the terms of surrender protected by the United States Government from molestation so long as they conformed to its conditions.

Grant immediately rose to the demand of the occasion—as he had a way of doing in great emergencies. He informed General Lee that his understanding of the convention at Appomattox was identical with his; and he is said to have threatened Johnson with the surrender of the command of the army unless the indict-

ment were quashed and the convention honorably observed.

Johnson himself, confronted by an ever-strengthening phalanx of enemies within his own party, soon, for his own reasons, underwent a change of heart, and from denouncing against the South measures that should "make treason odious," began to speak of the South to Southerners in a more conciliatory manner. Governor Letcher, of Virginia, who had been arrested, was treated in Washington with kindness and consideration. It was on learning of this that General Lee declared his opinion that the decision of war having been against the South, it was "the part of wisdom to acquiesce in the result, and of candor to recognize the fact." The interests of the State of Virginia, he said, were the same as those of the United States. Its prosperity would rise or fall with the welfare of the country. The duty of its citizens then appeared to him too plain to admit of doubt. He urged that all should unite in honest efforts to obliterate the effects of war and to restore the blessings of peace. That they should remain if possible in the country; promote harmony and good feeling; qualify themselves to vote and elect to the State and general legislatures wise and patriotic men who would devote their abilities

to the interests of the country and the healing of all dissensions. "I have," he asserted, "invariably recommended this course since the cessation of hostilities, and have endeavored to practise it myself."*

He was much disturbed about this time by the tendency of some of his old friends in their despair to emigrate from the South. That constant soul knew no defeat, much less despair, and he had not despaired of the South. He protested against leaving the State for any reason, avowing his unalterable belief in the duty of every man to remain and bear his part in whatever trials might befall. "The thought of abandoning the country and all that must be left in it," he wrote, "is abhorrent to my feelings, and I prefer to struggle for its restoration and share its fate rather than to give up all as lost, and Virginia has need for all her sons."† And this devotion he exemplified to the fullest extent in his life.

The war had scarcely ceased and his condition of narrow circumstances become known, when offers of places of honor and profit began to come to him: offers of the presidency of insurance companies and of other industrial

* Letter of August 28, 1865, to ex-Governor Letcher.

† Letter to Commodore M. F. Maury, September 8, 1865.

enterprises—proposals that he should allow his name to be used for the highest office in the gift of the State; even offers from admirers in the old country of an asylum on that side of the water, where a handsome estate was tendered him, as a tribute of admiration, so that he could spend the residue of his life in peace and comfort.

His reply to all these allurements was that which we now know was the only one he could make: a gracious but irrevocable refusal. During the war, when a friend had suggested to him the probability that the people of the South would demand that he should be their President, he had promptly and decisively declared that he would never accept such a position. So now, when the governorship of Virginia was proposed to him, he firmly refused to consider it. With the same firmness he rejected all proposals to provide him with honorable commercial positions at a high salary.

On one of these occasions he was approached with a tender of the presidency of an insurance company at a salary of $50,000 a year. He declined it on the ground that it was work with which he was not familiar. "But, General," said the gentleman who represented the insurance company, "you will not be expected to do

any work; what we wish is the use of your name."

"Do you not think," said General Lee, "that if my name is worth $50,000 a year, I ought to be very careful about taking care of it?"

Amid the commercialism of the present age this sounds as refreshing as the oath of a knight of the Round Table.

Defeated in one warfare, he was still a captain militant in the service of Duty: Duty, that like the moon, often shows her darkened face to her votary, though in the future she may beam with radiance.

Duty now appeared to him to send her summons from a little mountain town in which was a classical school which Washington had endowed, and Lee, turning from all offers of wealth and ease, obeyed her call.

"They are offering my father everything," said one of his daughters, "but the only thing he will accept: a place to earn honest bread while engaged in some useful work." That speech, made to a Trustee of the Institution referred to, brought Lee the offer of the presidency of Washington College at a salary of $1,500 a year—and after some hesitation, due to his fear that his association with an institution might in the state of political feeling then existing

prove an injury rather than a benefit to it, he accepted it.

Thus, the first captain of his time, and almost, if not quite, the most famous man in the world, with offers that might well, in that hour of trial, have allured even him with all his modesty, turned his back on the world, and, following the lamp with which Duty appeared to light his way, rode quietly to that little mountain town in Rockbridge to devote the remainder of his life to fitting the sons of his old soldiers to meet the exactions of the coming time. On his old war-horse, he rode into Lexington alone, one afternoon in the early autumn, and, after a hush of reverent silence at his first appearance, was greeted on the streets by his old soldiers with the far-famed rebel yell which he had heard last as he rode down the lane from Appomattox.

Ah! ride on alone, old man, with Duty at thy bridle-bit: behind thee is the glory of thy military career; before thee is the transcendent fame of thy future. Thou shalt abide there henceforth; there shall thy ashes repose; but thou shalt make of that little town a shrine to which pilgrims shall turn with softened eyes so long as men admire virtue and the heart aspires to the ideal of Duty.

He was sworn in as president on the 2d of

October, 1865, and thenceforth his life was devoted to the new service he had entered on, with the same zeal with which he always applied himself to the dutv before him.

CHAPTER XVII

LEE AS COLLEGE PRESIDENT

NO part of his life reflects greater honor on his memory than that which was now to come. Here, as in everything else, he addressed all his powers to the work in hand. He found the institution merely an old and denominational college, dilapidated and well-nigh ruined, without means and without students. The mere fact of his connection with it gave it at once a reputation. He changed the little college, as if by an enchanter's wand, from a mere academy to a great institution of learning. He instituted or extended the honor system—that Southern system which reckons the establishment of character to be at once the basis and end of all education. Students flocked there from all over the South. He knew them all—and, what is more, followed them all in their work. He was as prompt at chapel as the chaplains; as interested in the classes as the professors and certainly more than the students.

"I have led the young men of the South to

battle," he said on one occasion; "I have seen many of them die on the field. I shall devote my remaining energy to training young men to do their duty in life." And nobly he performed this high task. The standard he ever held up was that of duty.

His old soldiers, often at great sacrifice, sent their sons to be under his direction, and to learn at his feet the stern lesson of duty. But it was he who made the college worthy of their confidence. He elevated the standards, broadened the scope, called about him the most accomplished professors to be found and inspired them with new enthusiasm. No principle was too abstruse for him to grasp; no detail too small for him to examine. He familiarized himself alike with the methods employed at the best institutions, and with the conduct and standing of every student at his own.

An educational official has stated that of a number of college presidents to whom he addressed an inquiry relating to educational matters, General Lee was the only one who took the trouble to send him an answer. He who had commanded armies, "the lowliest duties on himself did lay." He audited every account; he presided at every faculty meeting; studied and signed every report.

In fact, the chief stimulus to the students was the knowledge that General Lee was familiar with every student's standing, and to some extent, with every man's conduct. An invitation to visit him in his office was the most dreaded event in a student's life, though the actual interview was always softened by a noble courtesy on the President's part into an experience which left an impress throughout life and ever remained a cherished memory.

To one thus summoned, the General urged greater attention to study, on the ground that it would prevent the failure which would otherwise inevitably come to him.

"But, General, you failed," said the youth—meaning, as he explained afterward, to pay him a tribute.

"I hope that you may be more fortunate than I," replied the General quietly.

On another occasion, a youth from the far South having "cut lectures" to go skating, an accomplishment he had just acquired, was summoned to appear before the president, and having made his defence was told by the General that he should not have broken the rule of the institution, but should have requested to be excused from attendance on lectures.

"You understand now?"

"Yes, sir. Well, General, the ice is fine this morning. I'd like to be excused to-day," promptly replied the ready youngster.

It was occasionally the habit of the young orators who spoke in public at celebrations to express their feelings by indulging in compliments to General Lee, and the reverse of compliments to "the Yankees." Such references, clad in the glowing rhetoric and informed with the deep feeling of youthful oratory, never failed to stir their audiences and evoke unstinted applause. General Lee, however, promptly put a stop to this. He notified the speakers that such references were to be omitted. "Those to me are embarrassing to me; those to the North tend to promote ill feeling and injure the institution."

Among the students at this time were quite a number who had been soldiers and were habituated to a degree of freedom. Pranks among the students were, of course, common, and were not dealt with harshly. One episode, however, occurred which showed the strong hand in the soft gauntlet.

Prior to General Lee's installation as president, it had always been the custom to grant at least a week's holiday at Christmas. This custom the faculty, under the president's lead,

did away with, and thenceforth only Christmas Day was given as a holiday.

A petition to return to the old order having failed, a meeting of the students was held and a paper was posted containing many signatures declaring the signers' determination not to attend lectures during Christmas week. Some manifestation appeared on the part of certain of the faculty of giving in to the students' demand. General Lee settled the matter at once by announcing that any man whose name appeared on the rebellious declaration would be expelled from the college. And if every student signed it, he said, he would send every one home and simply lock up the college and put the key in his pocket.

The activity displayed in getting names off the paper was amusing, and the attendance at lectures that Christmas was unusually large.

I cannot forbear to relate a personal incident which I feel illustrates well General Lee's method of dealing with his students. I was so unfortunate while at college as to have always an early class, and from time to time on winter mornings it was my habit "to run late," as the phrase went. This brought me in danger of meeting the president on his way from chapel, a contingency I was usually careful to guard

against. One morning, however, I miscalculated, and as I turned a corner came face to face with him. His greeting was most civil, and touching my cap I hurried by. Next moment I heard my name spoken, and turning I removed my cap and faced him.

"Yes, sir."

"Tell Miss —— (mentioning the daughter of my uncle, General Pendleton, who kept house for him) that I say will she please have breakfast a little earlier for you."

"Yes, sir." And I hurried on once more, resolved that should I ever be late again I would, at least, take care not to meet the General.

Craving due allowance alike for the immaturity of a boy and the mellowing influence of passing years, I will try to picture General Lee as I recall him, and as he must be recalled by thousands who yet remember him. He was, in common phrase, one of the handsomest men I ever knew and easily the most impressive looking. His figure, which in earlier life had been tall and admirably proportioned, was now compact and rounded rather than stout, and was still in fine proportion to his height. His head, well set on his shoulders, and his erect and dignified carriage made him a distinguished and, indeed, a noble figure. His soft hair and carefully trimmed beard,

silvery white, with his florid complexion and dark eyes, clear and frank, gave him a pleasant and kindly expression, and I remember how, when he smiled, his eyes twinkled and his teeth shone. He always walked slowly, and even pensively, for he was, without doubt, already sensible of the trouble which finally struck him down; and the impression that remains with me chiefly is of his dignity and his gracious courtesy. I do not remember that we feared him at all, or even stood in awe of him. Collegians stand in awe of few things or persons. But we honored him beyond measure, and after nearly forty years he is still the most imposing figure I ever saw.

Even here, in his seclusion, while honored by the best of those who had bravely fought against him, he was pursued by the malignity of those haters of the South, who, having kept carefully concealed while the guns were firing, now that all personal danger was over endeavored to make amends by assailing with their clamor the noblest of the defeated. It was a period of passion, and those who, under other conditions, might have acted with deliberation and reason, gave the loose to their feeling, and surrendered themselves blindly to the direction of their wildest and most passionate leaders. Those against whose private life the purity of his life was an

ever-burning protest reviled him most bitterly. The hostile press of the time was filled with railing against him; the halls of Congress rang with denunciation of him as a traitor: the foolish and futile yelping of the cowardly pack that ever gather about the wounded and spent lion. And with what noble dignity and self-command he treated it all! To the nobility of a gentleman he added the meekness of a Christian. When, with a view to setting an example to the South, he applied to be included in the terms of the general amnesty finally offered, his application was ignored, and to his death he remained "a prisoner on parole."

He was dragged before high commissions and was cross-examined by hostile prosecutors panting to drive or inveigle him into some admission which would compromise him, but without avail, or even the ignoble satisfaction to his enemies that they had ruffled his unbroken calm.

From this time he gave all the weight of his great name to the complete re-establishment of the Union, and as his old soldiers followed and obeyed him on the field of battle, so now the whole South followed him in peace. Only the South knows as yet what the Union owes to Lee.

Happily, as we know, his serene soul, lifted

too high to be disturbed by any storms of doubt, was untroubled by any question born of his failure. "I did nothing more," he said to General Hampton, one of his most gallant lieutenants, "than my duty required of me; I could have taken no other course without dishonor, and if it were all to be done over again, I should act in precisely the same manner."

Thus, in the lofty calm of a mind conscious of having tried faithfully to follow ever the right; of having obeyed without question the command of duty, in simple reliance on the goodness of God, the great captain passed the brief evening of his life, trying by his constant precept and example to train the young men of the South as Christian gentlemen.

He read little on the war, and though he at one time contemplated writing a history of, at least, some part of it, he put aside the temptation and contented himself with writing a brief memoir of his honored father to accompany a new and revised edition which he edited of the latter's "Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department of the United States."

It was his diversion to ride his old war-horse, Traveller, among the green hills of that beautiful country about Lexington, at times piloting through the bridle-paths the little daughters of

some professor, sun-bonneted and rosy, riding two astride the same horse; or now and then meeting an old soldier who asked the privilege of giving for him once more the old cheer, which in past days had at sight of him rung out on so many a hard-fought field.

One of his biographers* relates that seeing him one day talking at his gate with a stranger to whom, as he ended, he gave some money, he enquired who the stranger was. "One of our old soldiers," said the General. "To whose command did he belong?" "Oh, he was one of those who fought against us," said General Lee. "But we are all one now, and must make no difference in our treatment of them."

Thus, in simple duties and simple pleasures, untouched by the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, he passed life's close among his own people, a hallowed memory forever to those who knew him, an example to all who lived in that dark time, or shall live hereafter; the pattern of a Christian gentleman, who did justice, loved mercy, and walked humbly with his God.

No more devout or humble Christian ever lived than he.

His last active work was done in a vestry meeting of his church, whose rector was one of his

*Rev. J. Wm. Jones.

old lieutenants, the Rev. Dr. Wm. N. Pendleton, formerly his chief of artillery; his last conscious act was to ask God's blessing at his board. As he ended, his voice faltered and he sank in his chair.

Surrounded by those who honored and loved him best, he lingered for a few days, murmuring at times orders to one of the best of his lieutenants, the gallant A. P. Hill, who had fallen at Five Forks, till on the 12th day of October, 1870, he that was valiant for truth passed quietly to meet the Master he had served so well, "and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."

Many places claimed the honor of guarding his sepulchre; but to Lexington it was fittingly awarded. Here he lived and here he died, and here in the little mountain town in the Valley of Virginia his sacred ashes lie hard by those of his great lieutenant, who, in the fierce sixties, was his right arm.

Happy the town that has two such shrines! Happy the people that have two such examples! Both have forever ennobled the soldier's profession, where to face death in obedience to duty is a mere incident of the life. Both were worthy successors of that noble centurion of whom Christ said, "I have not found so great

faith; no, not in Israel." Well may we apply to him his own words, written about the proposal to remove the remains of the Confederate dead from Gettysburg: "I know of no fitter resting place for a soldier than the field on which he has nobly laid down his life."

To those of us who knew him in the impressionable time of our youth, as, untouched by the furious railing of his enemies, he passed the evening of his life in unruffled calm, he seems the model of a knightly gentleman, ever loyal to duty and ever valiant for truth.

Well might he have said with that other Valiant-for-truth: "My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles who will now be my rewarder."

No sooner had he passed away than the ignoble enemies of the South, safe at the moment from her resentment, set forth anew to insult her people by the rancor of their insults to her honored dead. While her bells were tolling, the halls of Congress and the hostile press rang anew with diatribes against her fallen leader.

But the wolfish hatred that had hounded him so long and now broke forth in one last bitter

chorus was soon drowned in the acclaim of the world that one had passed away whose life had honored the whole human race.

The world had already recognized and fixed him forever among her constellation of great men, and the European press vied with that of the South in rendering him the tribute of honor. Thus, the only effect of the attacks made on him by the enemies of the South was to secure for them the hatred or contempt of the Southern people.

"As obedient to law as Socrates," wrote of him one who had studied his character well, and the type was well chosen. All through his life he illustrated this virtue; and never so fully as when he put aside high preferment in the profession he so passionately loved and so nobly illustrated to obey the laws under which he had been reared and cast in his lot with his people, though the sacrifice cost him tears of blood. Among the foolish charges made by some in the hour of passion was this: that he believed the South would win in the war and achieve its independence, whereupon he would be its idol. In other words, that he was lured by ambition. Only ignorance wedded to passion could assert so baseless a charge. Even had he thus imagined that the South might win its independence, Lee

was, of all men, the last to be swayed by such a consideration. But as a fact, we know that it was at great sacrifice he made his choice and that only the purest motives of love of Liberty and obedience to Duty influenced his choice. The entrance of Virginia into the Confederacy of the South threw him out of the position to which his rank entitled him. But while others wrangled and scrambled for office and rank, he with utter self-abnegation declared himself "willing to serve anywhere where he could be most useful." And it is known to those who knew him well that at one time he even thought of enlisting as a private in the company commanded by his eldest son, Captain G. W. C. Lee.* Such simplicity and virtue are antique.

Field Marshall Viscount Wolseley, referring long afterward to his first meeting with Lee, in the summer of 1862, says: "Every incident in that visit is indelibly stamped on my memory. All he said to me then and during subsequent conversations is still fresh in my recollection. It is natural it should be so; for he was the ablest general and to me seemed the greatest man I ever conversed with, and yet I have had the privilege of meeting Von Moltke and Prince Bismarck. General Lee was one of the few

* Jones's "Life and Letters of Robert E. Lee," p. 164.

men who ever seriously impressed and awed me with their inherent greatness. Forty years have come and gone since our meeting and yet the majesty of his manly bearing, the genial, winning grace, the sweetness of his smile, and the impressive dignity of his old-fashioned style of dress, come back to me among my most cherished recollections. His greatness made me humble and I never felt my own insignificance more keenly than I did in his presence. . . . He was, indeed, a beautiful character, and of him it might truthfully be written, 'In righteousness did he judge and make war!'"

CHAPTER XVIII

SOURCES OF CHARACTER

THERE is something in all of us that responds to the magic of military prowess. That wise observer, Dr. Johnson, once said: "Every man thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier or been at sea," and when Boswell said, "Lord Mansfield would not be ashamed of it," he replied, "Sir, if Lord Mansfield were in the presence of generals and admirals who had seen service, he would wish to creep under the table. . . . If Socrates and Charles XII. of Sweden were in company, and Socrates should say, 'Follow me and hear a lecture on philosophy,' and Charles XII. should say, 'Follow me and help me to dethrone the Czar,' a man would be ashamed to follow Socrates."

Military glory is so dazzling that it blinds wholly most men; and a little all men. An Alexander conquering worlds until he weeps because no more are left to conquer; a Hannibal crossing the Alps and blowing his trumpets outside the very gates of Rome; Cæsar and Napoleon over-

sweeping Europe with their victorious eagles, are so splendid that the radiance of their achievements makes us forget the men they were. Alexander carousing at Babylon; Cæsar plotting to overthrow his country's liberties; Napoleon steeping the world in blood, but bickering in his confinement at St. Helena, are not pleasant to contemplate. There the habiliments of majesty are wanting; the gauds of pomp are stripped off and we see the men at their true worth.

Now, let us turn for a moment to Lee. Had we known him only as the victor of Mechanicsville, Fredericksburg, Manassas, Chancellorsville and Cold Harbor, we should have, indeed, thought him a supreme soldier. But should we have known the best of him? Without Gettysburg, without the long campaign of 1864, without the siege of Petersburg and without Appomattox, should we have dreamed of the sublime greatness of the man?

History may be searched in vain to find Lee's superior, and only once or twice in its long course will be found his equal. To find his prototype, we must go back to ancient times, to the half-legendary heroes who have been handed down to us by Plutarch's matchless portraiture; yet, as we read their story, we see that we have been given but one side of their

character. Their weaknesses have mainly been lost in the lapse of centuries, and their virtues are magnified in the enhaloing atmosphere of time. But, as to Lee, we know his every act.

There was no act nor incident of his life on which a light as fierce as that which beats upon a throne did not fall. He had in his lifetime what Macaulay, in speaking of Dr. Johnson, terms "posthumous fame." He was investigated by high commissions; his every act was examined by hostile prosecutors. His conduct was inquired into by those who had every incentive of hostility to secure his downfall and his degradation. Yet, amid these fierce assaults, he remained as unmoved as he had stood when he had held the heights of Fredericksburg against the furious attacks of Burnside's intrepid infantry. From this inquisition he came forth as unsoiled as the mystic White Knight of the Round Table. In that vivid glare he stood revealed like the angel bathed in light; the closest scrutiny but brought forth new virtues and disclosed a more rounded character:

"Like Launcelot brave, like Galahad clean."

Had he been Regulus, we know that he would have returned to Carthage with undisquieted

brow to meet his doom. Had he been Aristides, we know that he would have faithfully inscribed his name on the shell entrusted to him for his banishment. Had he been Cæsar, none but a fool would have dared to offer him a crown. Ambition could not have tempted him; Ease could not have beguiled him; Pleasure could not have allured him.

Should we come down to later times, where shall we find his counterpart, unless we take the Bayards, the Sidneys and the Falklands, the highest of the noblest?

So, to get his character as it is known to thousands, we must take the best that was in the best that the history of men has preserved. Something of Plato's calm there was; all of Sidney's high-mindedness; of Bayard's fearless and blameless life; of the constancy of William the Silent, of whom it was said that he was *Tranquillus in arduis*. It has been finely said of him* that, "He was Cæsar without his ambition, Frederick without his tyranny, Napoleon without his selfishness and Washington without his reward."

But most of all, he was like Washington. Here—in that great Virginian—and here only do we find what appears to be an absolute parallel.

* By Senator Hill of Georgia.

Something must account for this wonderful development. Character does not reach such consummate flowering alone, and by accidental cause! It is a product of various forces and such a character as Lee's is the product of high forces met in conjunction. Genius may be born anywhere; it is a result of prenatal forces. A Keats may come from a horse-jobber's fireside; a Columbus may spring from a wool-comber's home; a Burns may come from an Ayrshire cottage; but it is a law of Nature that character is a result largely of surrounding conditions, previous or present.

A distinguished scholar* has called attention to the resemblance between the situation of the Southerners in the Civil War and the Southern Greeks in the Peloponesan War. He has further noted the resemblance in certain fundamental elements of character between the Virginians and both the Greeks and the Romans, marking particularly their poise, a poise unaffected by conditions which might startle or seduce. The Greeks and the Romans were both peoples of the South, and like the Southern people whose character Lee illustrated, their successes were founded upon their character as a people, among the elements of which were a

* Dr. Basil L. Gildersleeve.

passion for liberty and a passion for dominance. It was this poise which Lee illustrated so admirably throughout life, a poise which, as Dr. Gildersleeve has said, gave opportunity for first the undazzled vision, and then the swoop of the eagle.

Whatever open hostility or carping criticism may say in derogation of Southern life, and it may be admitted that there was liable to be the waste and inertia of all life that is easy and secluded; yet, the obvious, the unanswerable reply is that it produced such a character as Robert E. Lee. As Washington was the consummate flower of the life of Colonial Virginia, so Lee, clinging close to "his precious example," became the perfect fruit of her later civilization.

It was my high privilege to know him when I was a boy. It was also my privilege to see something of that army which followed him throughout the war, and on whose courage and fortitude his imperishable glory as a captain is founded. I question whether in all the army under his command was one man who had his genius; but I believe that in character, he was but the type of his order, and as noble as was his, ten thousand gentlemen marched behind him who, in all the elements of private character, were his peers.

CHAPTER XIX

THE HERITAGE OF THE SOUTH

I STOOD not a great while ago on the most impressive spot, perhaps, in all Europe: beneath the majestic dome of the Invalides where stands the tomb of Napoleon. It was a summer evening, and we descended the steps and stood at the door of the crypt where repose the ashes of him who was doubtless the greatest soldier of all time; who by his genius took France from the throes of a revolution and lifted her while he lived, to the head of the nations. Just then the hour came for closing, and suddenly in the marble rotunda above us began the roll of a drum, which swelled and throbbed until the whole earth seemed reverberating to its martial tone. It was the long roll which had sounded before so many hard-fought fields, and as it throbbed and throbbed in the falling dusk of that summer evening, there seemed to troop before the mental vision the long lines that had fought and fallen on so many a glorious field:

the soldiers of Lodi and of Austerlitz, of Friedland and Wagram and Borodino.

So, as I have immersed myself in the subject of this great captain and noble gentleman, there has appeared to come before me from a misty past that other army, inspired by higher motives—by the highest motive: love of Liberty, on whose imperishable deeds is founded the fame of an even greater, because a nobler soldier; that army of the South, composed not only of the best that the South had, but wellnigh of all she had. Gentle and simple, old and young, rich and poor, secessionist and anti-secessionist, with every difference laid aside, animated by one common spirit: love of country, they flocked to the defence of the South. Through four years they withstood to the utmost the fiercest assaults of fortune, and submitted only with their annihilation.

"The benediction of the o'ercovering Heavens
Fall on their heads like dew, for they were worthy
To inlay Heaven with stars."

Through more than twice four years their survivors and their children endured what was bitterer than the sharpest agony of the battle-time, and strong in the consciousness of their rectitude, came out torn and bleeding, but

victorious. Such fortitude, such courage and sublime constancy cannot be in vain. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church; so the blood of patriots is the seed of liberty. The history of their valor and their fortitude in defence of Constitutional Liberty is the heritage of the South, a heritage in which the North will one day be proud to claim a share, as she will be the sharer in their work.

Some day, doubtless, there will stand in the Nation's capital a great monument to Lee, erected not only by the Southern people, whose glory it is that he was the fruit of their civilization and the leader of their armies; but by the American people, whose pride it will be that he was their fellow-citizen. Meantime he has a nobler monument than can be built of marble or of brass. His monument is the adoration of the South; his shrine is in every Southern heart.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Extracts from Letter to Author from General Marcus J. Wright

Washington, *September* 26, 1907.

* * * * * * * * *

The military population (men between eighteen and forty-five years old, not exempt by law) of the Northern States in 1860, was 3,769,020, omitting California, Colorado, Dakota, District of Columbia, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington Territory and West Virginia, not given in the tables, but which may be stated as aggregating 135,627. This added to 3,769,020, the military population of eighteen Northern States makes a total of 3,904,647 subject to military duty in the States and Territories of the North.

The military population of the Southern States (exclusive of Kentucky, Maryland and Missouri) in 1860, was 1,064,193. Deducting from this number the 86,009 that entered the Federal service and 80,000, the estimated number of Union men who did not take up arms, there remained to the Confederacy 898,184 men capable of bearing arms from which to draw.

It stands thus:

Military population of the North	3,904,647
Military population of the South	898,184
Difference in favor of the North	3,006,463

The military population in 1860:

Of Kentucky	180,589
" Maryland	102,715
" Missouri	232,781
	516,085

These three States gave to the Federal army 231,509 men. Of these 190,744 were whites and 40,765 were negroes.

An official published statement of the Adjutant-General of the United States Army gives the total number of men called for and furnished to the United States Army from April 15, 1861, to the close of the war as 2,865,028 men. Of this number 186,017 were negroes and 494,900 were foreigners.

From all reliable data that could be secured, it has been estimated by the best authorities that the strength of the Confederate armies was about 600,000 men, and of this number not more than two-thirds were available for active duty in the field. The necessity of guarding a long line of exposed seacoast, of maintaining permanent garrisons at different posts on inland waters, and at numerous other points, deprived the Confederate Army in the field of an accession of strength.

The large preponderance of Federal forces was manifest in all the important battles and campaigns of the war. The largest force ever assembled by the Confederates was at the seven days' fight around Richmond.

General Lee's report showed 80,835 men present for duty, when the movement against General McClellan commenced, and the Federal forces numbered 115,249.

At Antietam the Federals had 87,164, and the Confederates 35,255.

At Fredericksburg the Federals had 110,000 and the Confederates 78,110.

At Chancellorsville the Federals had 131,661, of which number only 90,000 were engaged, and the Confederates had 57,212.

At Gettysburg the Federals had 95,000, and the Confederates 44,000.

At the Wilderness the Federals had 141,160, and the Confederates 63,981.

At the breaking of the Confederate lines at Petersburg, April 1, 1865, General Lee commenced his retreat with 32,000 men, and eight days after he surrendered to General Grant, who had a force of 120,000 men.

From the latter part of 1862 until the close of the war in 1865, there was a constant decrease of the numerical strength of the Confederate Army. On the other hand, the records show that during that time the Federal Army was strengthened to the extent of 363,390 men.

The available strength of the Confederate Army at the close of the war has been the subject of much discussion.

Estimates have been made varying from 150,000 to 250,000 men.

The number of paroles issued to Confederate soldiers may be taken as a basis of calculation. Mr. Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War, on November 22, 1865, made the following official statement of prisoners, surrendered by different Confederate armies that were paroled:

Army of Northern Virginia . . .	27,805
Army of Tennessee	31,243
Army of Missouri	7,978
Army of Department of Alabama .	42,293
Army of Trans-Mississippi Dept. .	17,686
Army of Department of Florida .	6,428
	133,433
Miscellaneous Departments of Virginia	9,072
Cumberland, Maryland, &c. . .	9,377
Department of Washington . . .	3,390
In Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana and Texas .	13,922
Nashville and Chattanooga . . .	5,029
	40,790

These two lists aggregate 174,223, the number of paroled Confederates reported by Secretary Stanton.

Those who have estimated the strength of the Confederate Army at the close of the war at 250,000 reached that result by adding to the 174,223 the number of men, 75,777, which they assumed to have returned to their homes without paroles. If this were true, it would appear, taking into account the 40,790 men reported as paroled at various places, that 116,567 Confederate soldiers did not surrender, and were not paroled with the armies to which they belonged.

This is at variance with the estimated strength of these armies just previous to the surrender.

The report of Secretary Stanton is misleading, because it conveys the impression that the 174,223 men reported as paroled were bearing arms at the time of their surrender. An examination of the parole lists shows that such was not the case. These lists embrace men in hospitals, men retired from the army by reason of disability and non-arms bearing men who sought paroles as a safeguard. There were Confederate soldiers who returned to their homes without paroles, but they did not exceed in number those embraced in Secretary Stanton's list, that were not borne upon the roll.

In April, 1865, the aggregate of present and absent showed the strength of the Confederate Army to be about 275,000 men. Of this number 65,387 were in Federal military prisons and 52,000 were absent by reason of disability and other causes. Deducting the total of these two numbers, 117,387 from 275,000, we

have 157,613 as showing the full effective strength of the Confederate Army at the close of the war:

SUMMARY

Strength of Federal Army at close of war:	
Present	797,807
Absent	202,700
	1,000,507
Strength of Confederate Army at close of war:	
Present	157,613
Absent	117,387
	275,000

* * * * * * * * *

(Signed)

MARCUS J. WRIGHT.

Extract from Letter to Author from Colonel Thomas C. Livermore

GRANT'S ARMY PRESENT FOR DUTY

On the Rapidan and James, April 30, 1864, 168,198 (68 War Records—69 W. R., 195–198–427).
On the James, May, 31, 1864, 133,728 (69 W. R., 426–427).
On the James, January 31, 1865, 99,214 (95 W. R., 61).
On the James, February 25, 1865, 98,457 (*Ibid.*).
On the James, March 31, 1865, 100,907 (*Ibid.*).

LEE'S ARMY PRESENT FOR DUTY

On the Rapidan and James, Army of North Virginia, April 30, 1864, 54,344 (60 W. R., 1,297–1,298).
2 div. and McLaw's brigade (est. 1,253) of Longstreet's corps, March 31, 1864, 10,428* (59 W. R., 721).
Dept. of Richmond, April 20, 1864, 7,265 (60 W. R., 1,299).

Total, 72,037.

On the James, January 31, 1865, 57,387† (95 W. R., 386—95 W. R., 387, 388, 389, 390).

* Colonel Taylor of Lee's staff and Longstreet in their books estimate Longstreet's command at 10,000.

† Excluding the cavalry of the Valley District, the number of which is not reported, but probably was about 1,000 (Warren Court, 482).

On the James, February 25, 1865, 63,500.*
On the James, March 31, 1865, 56,840† (97 W. R., 1,331, Warren Court, 482).

(Signed) T. C. Livermore.

* The number of the infantry estimated at about 7 per cent. and the cavalry at about 15 per cent. more than the "effectives" reported.

† The result of deducting estimated losses and desertions reported and estimated, at 6,760 for March, from number given above for February, 25.

APPENDIX B

EXTRACT FROM LETTER TO AUTHOR FROM ANDREW R. ELLERSON, ESQ., OF ELLERSON'S, HANOVER COUNTY, VA.

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, *June* 10, 1908.

* * * * * * * * * *

BEFORE the battles around Richmond began, my regiment (4th Virginia Cavalry) was encamped on the extreme left of the army in the neighborhood of Goodall's. The day before the battle of Mechanicsville, my company (Company G) was detached from the regiment and camped that night at Emanuel Church, a few miles north of Richmond. The next morning Jack Stark and myself were ordered to report to General Longstreet, for what purpose we had no idea, but congratulated ourselves upon the fact that we should at least make a good breakfast. * * * The evening of the battle of Cold Harbor, General Longstreet got each division of his corps and placed them in position. This was just before the battle commenced. I stood in the front until the bullets were flying thick and fast, and feeling very uncomfortable, and having no business there, I thought I would retire to a hill in the rear where I could have the pleasure of

looking on at a battle without being in any apparent danger. Upon this hill I found General Jackson, seated entirely alone upon his horse. We had been there some time when a shell burst some few feet to his left, and in a few minutes a second shell burst. Even before this time I had become again very uncomfortable, and would have liked very much to change my position, but I did not like to show the white feather in the presence of General Jackson, who had not winced, but after the second shell had burst near him, he remarked in a quiet way, "When two shells burst near you it is well to change your position if you can do so," so we both rode some distance to our right and got out of range of the bullets.

That night General Lee and General Longstreet made their head-quarters in Hogan's dwelling. I was sitting on the steps of this building about ten o'clock, when General Jackson rode up with Lincoln Sydnor, who was his guide on this occasion. General Jackson gave his horse to Sydnor to hold and went into the house, as I afterward learned, for a consultation with all of the higher officials of the army. Sydnor told me that the reason General Jackson reached Cold Harbor as late as he did was due to the fact that, although he was very near his old home, and where he was perfectly familiar with the country, the Yankees had cut down so many trees and made so many new roads that he actually got lost, and that just before reaching the point to which General Jackson had directed him to guide him, he found that he was on the wrong road,

and had to turn round the artillery in the woods and had to countermarch for quite a distance, which delayed them very materially. Sydnor told me that General Ewell, who was present, wanted to hang him to a tree, but General Jackson said it was all right; that we would get there in plenty of time. You know General Jackson has been frequently blamed for being late on this occasion, and it has often occurred to me that this simple reason may have been the cause of it, although I never heard it so stated. * * *

With best wishes and kind remembrances, I am * * * Yours,

A. R. Ellerson.

NOTE

To Mr. Charles Francis Adams, I wish, before closing this brief memoir, to make my acknowledgments for his courage, his breadth and the classic charm of his recent addresses on Lee. He is the worthy son and namesake of that true gentleman who, when taunted in England with the victories won by the Confederate generals, replied nobly, "They are my countrymen." It was the same note which Lee sounded at Chambersburg in his order to his then conquering army and which he ever sounded to the end.

T. N. P.

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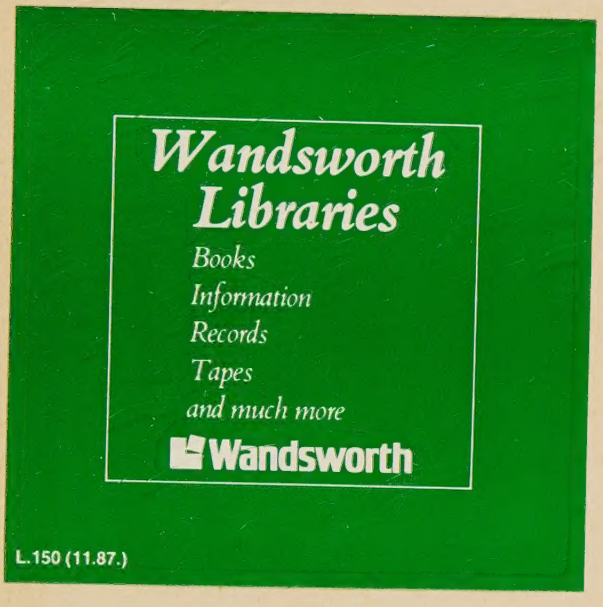
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